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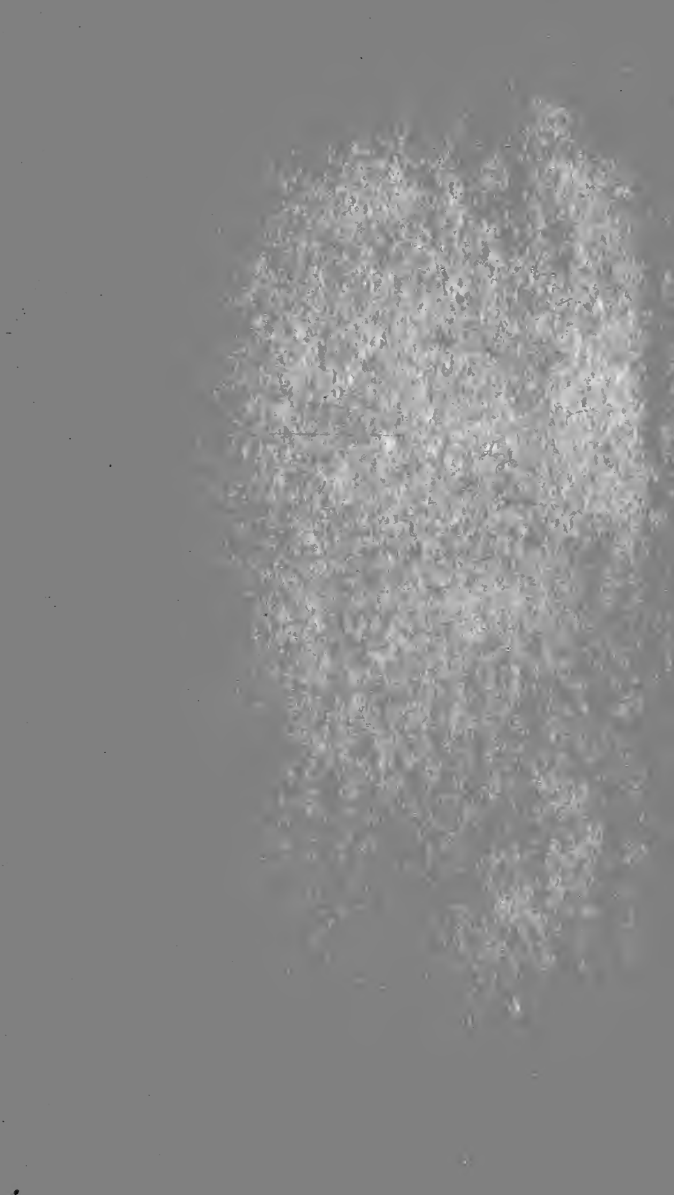
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Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

SPIRITUAL, NOT RITUAL

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# CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

SPIRITUAL, NOT RITUAL

BY

ROBERT ✓ MACNAIR, M.A.

*"There is ONE BAPTISM."*—EPH. iv. 5.

*"BAPTISM, . . . NOT THE PUTTING AWAY OF THE FILTH OF THE FLESH, BUT THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD."*—1 PET. iii. 21.

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## PREFACE.

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THE views expressed in the following pages are not altogether new. The general conclusion arrived at has been held—in its negative form, at least—by the Society of Friends, for the last two centuries. And it was maintained in its full breadth, and defended—with kindred views on other subjects—by the late William Thomas Wishart, of St. John, New Brunswick, in his *Theological Essays*, published in 1846. It is now upwards of seven years since I first became acquainted with this work. I was then a minister of the Established Church of Scotland, in Prince Edward Island. Practical difficulties in connection with the administration of ordinances led me more than once, both there and in a subsequent charge in this country (at Gourrock), to consider seriously its statements. But the singularity of the views it expressed; the lurking suspicion that, while they seemed to give new force to many texts, they could not be reconciled with all Scripture; the magnitude of the step from the old to the new; and, in the first instance at least, a sense of my own youth and in experi-

ence, deterred me from formally embracing these views. Perhaps had I remained much longer in either place, I might have become not almost, but altogether, persuaded to adopt them. As it was, I escaped from the one charge on a visit to this country, where I continued for some time in a subordinate position, without being required to discharge all the functions of an ordained minister. And I took refuge at length from the other in an appointment which was offered me, as chaplain to the hospitals at Scutari, in the hope (not altogether realized) that the duties there would be confined to preaching and visiting.

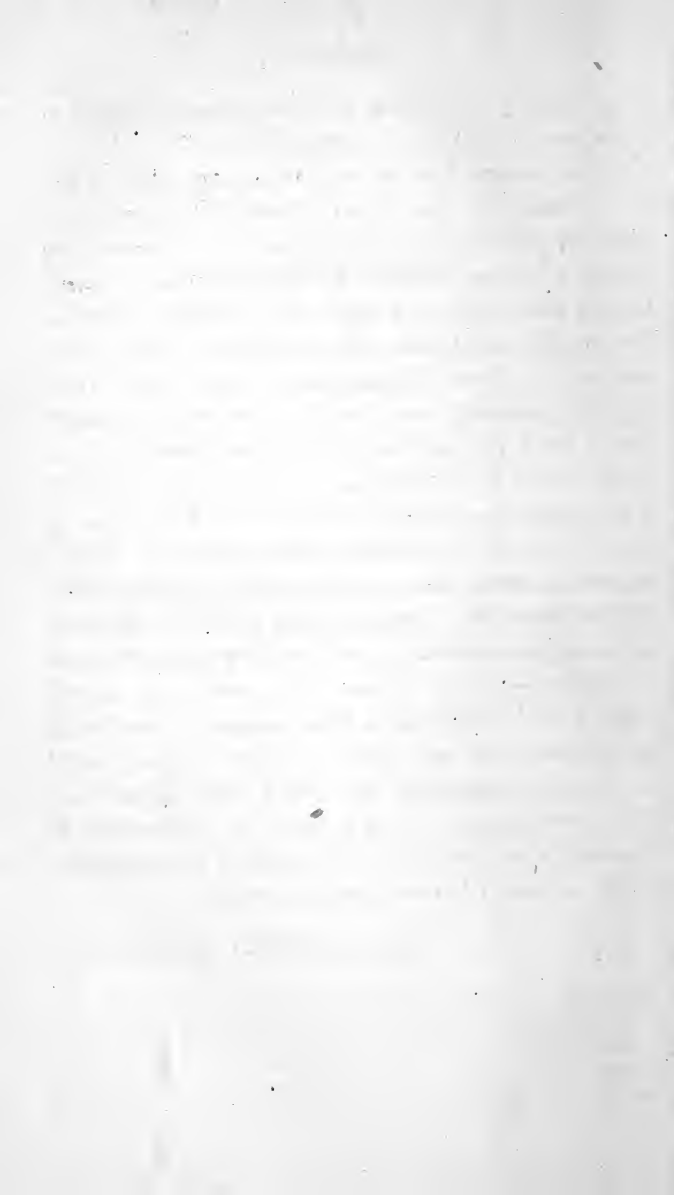
On my return from Scutari, at the close of the war, though occasionally preaching, I declined to take any part in the administration of ordinances. A residence abroad for the greater part of the next twelvemonths, with entire freedom from ministerial duty, gave me the opportunity of reviewing once more my whole position; and on my last return to this country, I wrote (on the 3d of August last) to the Moderator of the Presbytery of Paisley—the Presbytery which licensed and ordained me—stating that I could no longer continue to subscribe to “the whole doctrine” of the Confession of Faith, and giving my views more fully upon one or two subjects. In the month of December I met with a Committee appointed by the Presbytery to confer with me; and no practical result having come of this meeting, I wrote again to the Moderator and Members of Presbytery, demitting my status as an ordained minister and licentiate of the Church. This demission the Presbytery accepted at its meeting on the 3d of this month, and at the same

time intimated to me that I was no longer a minister or licentiate of the Church of Scotland.

Being thus free to think and to speak according to my own convictions, I send forth these sheets, giving my views upon one important subject, and the grounds on which I believe them to be according to Scripture. Having read again and again Mr. Wishart's works on this and kindred topics, and sympathizing with him in most of his views, I must have adopted much of his train of reasoning, and possibly some of his phraseology. But I feel satisfied that his best friends will not blame me for this; knowing, as they must, that should these reasonings commend themselves in any degree to others, this will of necessity create a desire for further acquaintance with him from whom they are in a great measure borrowed. And, confining myself in this work to one subject—and that, one on which variety of opinion is tolerated—I may perhaps meet with some readers where a work embracing a wider range, and conflicting with current views at a greater number of points, would be altogether discarded. If what I have written shall lead any to think, and to examine for themselves—to take their views not from tradition, but from Scripture—I shall feel that I have not written in vain.

ROBERT MACNAIR.

*February, 1858.*





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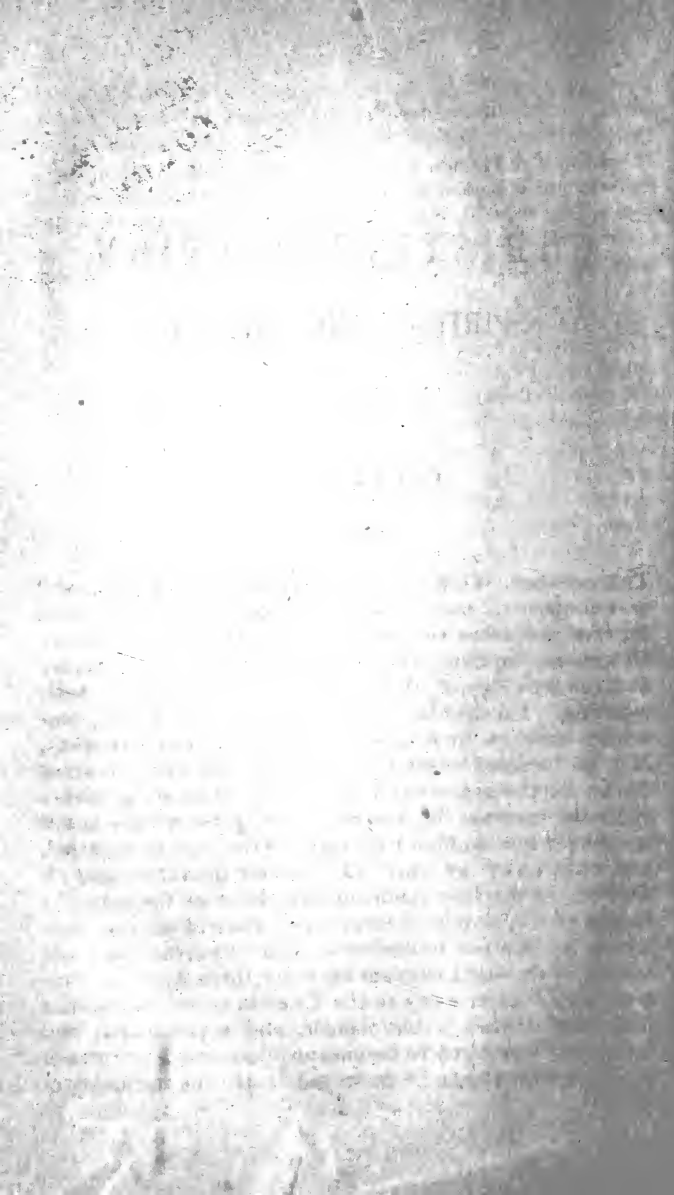
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# CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

## SPIRITUAL, NOT RITUAL.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTION.

THE question, What is Christian Baptism? is not a trivial or unimportant one. Among the last recorded words of the Saviour before His ascension are these, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them." It is surely of consequence to those who regard His word as law, to ascertain their meaning. On the day of Pentecost, the multitudes, conscience-stricken by sin, are exhorted by Peter, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." At Damascus, Saul—suddenly arrested in his course of persecution—has a messenger sent to him, who says, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." It is surely important that all who are in the like condemnation, heirs of the curse by reason of sin, should ascertain the nature of that baptism which is "for the remission of sins," by which sins are *washed away*,—that baptism by which three thousand souls were added on one day to the Church, by which he who had been "before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," was fitted to become an apostle, and to "preach the faith which once he destroyed." On the testimony of

one apostle, "as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." On the testimony of another, "baptism doth save." It cannot surely be a matter of little moment to those who "profess and call themselves Christians" to understand what that baptism is which constitutes the Christian indeed,—to the man who believes he has got, or who is in quest of salvation, to know what that baptism is which saves.

Men have never been able to free themselves from the thought that important results flow from baptism. Romanist tracts are not the only ones which picture in dark colours the doom of the unbaptized. Romanist mothers are not alone in evincing anxiety lest their children die unbaptized. The convert to immersion feels more comfortable after being dipped, for he believes that now for the first time he has been baptized. Parties removed the furthest from old-established and long-recognised modes of belief,—the Unitarian, the Swedenborgian, the Mormonist,—all retain some species of baptism. Thus each man, whatever he may think of the view of his neighbour, attaches importance to that which in his eyes constitutes baptism, and would not willingly part with it.

These statements, I am aware, must be taken with some limitation. For while in many, and these the most opposite quarters, the importance of the subject is either openly or tacitly admitted, there are some who profess to regard it as one of very inferior moment. Starting from the fact that those who attach importance to baptism have often held views which lead to absurdities, they have come to the conclusion that the path of true wisdom lies in ranking it with the tithing of mint, and anise, and cummin, and confining their attention to other subjects, which they are pleased to represent as the "weightier matters." While yielding obedience to what they regard as the letter of the command, they are satisfied that others should take a different view of the matter. If taxed with the reflection that no greater fruits follow from their practice than from that of others, they are ready with the answer that

greater were not to be expected. They quote the words, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision," and conceive that in doing so they have furnished reason sufficient for believing that baptism should avail nothing.

But no reasonings or sentiments of this character can alter the words of Scripture, or blot out from the page of inspiration the statements, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," "Baptism doth save." If upon these statements absurd and pernicious doctrines have been based by some, this has arisen not from exaggerating their importance, but from *missing their meaning*. And the true way to avoid such error in future is not by depreciating the subject, but by carefully studying its nature.

Conflicting views on this subject cannot be equally true, or equally harmless. If there be only one view which is scriptural, no pains should be spared to arrive at an understanding of what it is. For, giving its full weight to the language of Scripture, to mistake something else for Christian baptism is to pave the way for the most serious evils. Error here might be fatal. For a man to suppose that he has received Christian baptism when he has not, is to view himself as an heir to the kingdom, when he has neither part nor lot in the matter. If the strong expressions of Scripture are to be received in all their breadth, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that this is one of the most important of all subjects touched in the Bible, that its importance is to be estimated only by that of salvation itself. If "baptism doth save," every man who has a soul to be saved ought to be interested in the question, What is baptism?

And yet it needs scarcely to be told that the subject is far from being a settled one. Indeed, there are few upon which opinion has been more divided. The fact meets us at the outset, that while for more than eighteen centuries the commission to baptize has been before the Church, disciples have not yet agreed upon its meaning. On one point only in connection with it, has there been anything

like a general agreement. With very few exceptions, it has been viewed as a command to observe a rite, one feature of which consists in the use of water. But beyond this there is the utmost variety of opinion. Kitto, in his *Cyclopædia*, has the following remarks upon this subject:—

“As regards the *design* of Christian baptism, different views have been adopted by different parties. The principal are the following:—

“1. *That it is a direct instrument of grace*; the application of water to the person by a qualified functionary being regarded as the appointed vehicle by which God bestows regenerating grace upon men. This is the Romanist and Anglo-Catholic view.

“2. *That though not an instrument it is a seal of grace*; divine blessings being thereby confirmed and obnoxious to the individual. This is the doctrine of the confessions of the majority of the Reformed Churches.

“3. *That it is neither an instrument nor a seal of grace, but simply a ceremony of initiation into Church membership*. This is the Socinian view of the ordinance.

“4. *That it is a token of regeneration*; to be received only by those who give evidence of being really regenerated. This is the view adopted by the Baptists.

“5. *That it is a symbol of purification*; the use of which simply announces that the religion of Christ is a purifying religion, and intimates that the party receiving the rite assumes the profession, and is to be instructed in the principles of that religion. This opinion is extensively entertained by the Congregationalists of England.”

“Differences of opinion have also been introduced respecting the proper *mode* of baptism. Some contend that it should be by *immersion* alone; others that it should be only by *affusion* or *sprinkling*; and others, that it matters not in which way it be done, the only thing required being the ritual application of water to the person.”

“In fine, differences of opinion have arisen respecting the proper *subjects* of baptism.



"1. Those who maintain that baptism is to be administered only to those who believe and give evidence of being regenerated.

"2. Those who contend that baptism is to be administered not only to believers who have not been before baptized, but to the infant offspring of believers.

"3. Those who assert that baptism is to be administered to all who either will place themselves under Christian instruction, such as adults who have grown up as heathens, Jews, or infidels; or who may be thus placed by their parents or guardians, such as infants."

And he might have added as yet another point upon which opinion is divided, the *persons who are entitled to administer the rite*; some maintaining, as the authors of the Westminster Confession, that it may not be dispensed by any but by a minister of the word, lawfully ordained; and others believing that, in extreme cases at least, it may be dispensed by a private member of the Church.

Such is the diversity of opinion existing, the only point held in common by the various parties represented above being that baptism is a rite, requiring the use of *water*, though substitutes even for this have in emergencies been resorted to by some.

The controversies to which these several opinions have given rise seem as at present conducted to be endless, and I cannot help thinking that before any one of them can be satisfactorily settled, a deeper question must be investigated, and the point which is common to all, and which is generally taken for granted without much proof, must be thoroughly sifted and canvassed. It is assumed by these different parties that baptism is a rite, and hence the questions arise, What does it mean? What is its value? How is it to be administered? Who are its subjects? and, Who are to administer it? And if on all these points Scripture is silent, we may cease to wonder at the diversity of opinion which has been elicited by their discussion. I propose in this inquiry to go a step further back, and to ask—Is Christian baptism a rite? When Christ said, "Go, baptize all nations," did He ordain

the administration of a rite? Or has the Society of Friends, after all, reason for maintaining that a ritual baptism with water is no part of the Christian system? More generally, What do the words of the Saviour signify?

The point I propose to discuss is, not the expediency of water-baptism, but its obligation. The question I wish to approach, is not—Is it a wise institution? but—Is it a Christian ordinance? And in discussing this point, and answering this question, I shall go upon the common Protestant canon, of proving Scripture by Scripture. I mean not to entertain the questions,—Is water baptism a widespread fact? Does it exist in many, or in all Christian Churches? Had it a being in the sixteenth century? Did it exist in the seventh? Can it be clearly traced to the first? and, Was it administered by the apostles themselves?—except in so far as their solution might be supposed to affect the reasonings by which the meaning of the command is determined. In any other view, I consider these questions irrelevant, till the previous one is answered,—Does Christ enjoin it? Has He spoken upon the subject, and to what effect? Do the words baptizing all nations, as employed by Him, mean baptizing with water? There is not the smallest doubt, that the word baptize is used in the New Testament as equivalent to baptize with water, but it is equally certain that this is not its only meaning. I conceive that by examining all the passages in the New Testament in which the word is found, and perhaps one or two others in which words of similar import occur, we shall have data sufficient to determine the meaning in the passage in question.

The following lists are from “The Englishman’s Greek Concordance of the New Testament.” The verb βαπτίζω, *baptize*, is found in the following passages:—Matt. iii. 6, 11, 13, 14, 16; xx. 22, 23; xxviii. 19: Mark i. 4, 5, 8, 9; vi. 14; vii. 4; x. 38, 39; xvi. 16: Luke iii. 7, 12, 16, 21; vii. 29, 30; xi. 38; xii. 50: John i. 25, 26, 28, 31, 33; iii. 22, 23, 26; iv. 1, 2; x. 40: Acts i. 5; ii. 38, 41; viii. 12, 13, 16, 36, 38; ix. 18; x. 47, 48;

xi. 16; xvi. 15, 33; xviii. 8; xix. 3, 4, 5; xxii. 16; Rom. vi. 3: 1 Cor. i. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; x. 2; xii. 13; xv. 29: Gal. iii. 27. The noun βάπτισμα, *baptism*, in the following:—Matt. iii. 7; xx. 22, 23; xxi. 25: Mark i. 4; x. 38, 39; xi. 30: Luke iii. 3; vii. 29; xii. 50; xx. 4: Acts i. 22; x. 37; xiii. 24; xviii. 25; xix. 3, 4: Rom. vi. 4: Eph. iv. 5: Col. ii. 12: 1 Pet. iii. 21. Βαπτισμός, in these:—Mark vii. 4, 8: Heb. vi. 2; ix. 10. And βαπτιστής, *Baptist*, in these:—Matt. iii. 1; xi. 11, 12; xiv. 2, 8; xvi. 14; xvii. 13: Mark vi. 24, 25; viii. 28: Luke vii. 20, 28, 33; ix. 19. The verb λούω, *wash*, occurs (among other passages) in John xiii. 10; Heb. x. 22; Rev. i. 5: the noun λουτγόν, *washing*, in Eph. v. 26; Tit. iii. 5: ὕδωρ, *water* (among others), in John iii. 5; iv. 10, 11, 14, 15; xiii. 5; Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 1, 17. The verb ἑαντίζω, *sprinkle*, occurs in Heb. ix. 13, 19, 21; x. 22: and the noun ἑαντισμός, *sprinkling*, in Heb. xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2.

The lists following βαπτίζω, βάπτισμα, βαπτισμός, and βαπτιστής, I have given in full, as also those under ἑαντίζω and ἑαντισμός. Of the instances in which the other words occur, I have adduced as many as it will be necessary to consider in connection with this subject. This array of texts appears formidable; but by viewing as one passage the several successive verses of the same narrative in which the word is repeated, by grouping together parallel passages in the different evangelists,—whether parallel chronologically, as referring to the same incident, or only relatively, as suggesting the same view of the subject,—and by connecting in one view the various passages in which the word Baptist is applied as an appellation to John, the number calling for separate examination is considerably reduced. It will be convenient to take first those passages which occur in the historical, and then those in the epistolary books. For further convenience, the historical may be divided, according as they relate to events before the crucifixion, between crucifixion and the day of Pentecost, and on and after Pentecost.

The following will then be the scheme:—

# I. PASSAGES IN WHICH ONE OF THE WORDS, βαπτίζω, βάπτισμα, βαπτισμός, βαπτιστής, occurs—

## 1. IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, RELATING TO EVENTS—

### (1.) *Before the Crucifixion.*

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
iii. 1-16.	i. 1-11.	iii. 1-22.	i. 19-34; x. 40. iii. 22-36. iv. 1, 2.
xi. 2-19.		vii. 18-35. xi. 38.	
{ xiv. 2, 8. xvi. 14. xvii. 13. xxi. 25. xx. 20-28.	vii. 4, 8. vi. 14, 24, 25. viii. 28. xi. 30. x. 35-45.	ix. 19. xx. 4. xii. 50.	

### (2.) *After the Crucifixion, but before the Day of Pentecost.*

Matt. xxviii. 19.	Mark xvi. 16.	Acts i. 5, 22.
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### (3.) *On and after the Day of Pentecost.*

Acts ii. 38, 41. ,, viii. 5-17. ,, viii. 36-38.	Acts ix. 18; xxii. 16. ,, x. 37; xiii. 24. ,, x. 47, 48; xi. 16.	Acts xvi. 15, 33. ,, xviii. 8. ,, xviii. 25; xix. 1-7.
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## 2. IN THE EPISTLES.

Rom. vi. 3, 4. 1 Cor. i. 13-17. ,, x. 2.	1 Cor. xii. 13. ,, xv. 29. Gal. iii. 27.	Eph. iv. 5. Col. ii. 12. Heb. vi. 2.	Heb. ix. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 21.
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## II. PASSAGES BEARING UPON THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM, BUT NOT MENTIONING IT BY NAME.

John iii. 5. ,, iv. 5-15. ,, xiii. 1-17.	Eph. v. 26. Titus iii. 5. Heb. ix. 13, 19, 21.	Heb. x. 22. ,, xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2.	Rev. i. 5. ,, xxi. 6. ,, xxii. 1, 17.
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Of the historical passages the first part of the examination will thus be introductory to the general question, its object being to ascertain the meaning of the word baptize prior to the giving of the command in Matt. xxviii. 19, and thus from previous usage to arrive at the probable meaning in this instance. In the second the more direct question will come before us, and the object will be to apply the deductions arrived at to the command itself, to ascertain from

these deductions, from the language of the command, the structure of the passage in which it is found, and a comparison of other passages in the same period, what meaning ought to be attached to the word baptize in this instance. The examination of the next set of passages will be with a view to ascertain the bearing of apostolic practice upon the interpretation adopted. The object will be—not to set up that practice as an infallible standard by which to try this interpretation, but as a circumstance by which it may be corroborated, if true,—not to try the words of Jesus by the works of His disciples, but to ascertain whether the way in which the Holy Spirit speaks of these works is or is not consistent with the view taken of Christian baptism. Proceeding with the examination, the next object will be to try our conclusion by the subsequent usage of words in the epistles, to ascertain whether the interpretation we have put upon the command of Him who had the Spirit without measure accords with the view derived from the writings of holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The second general division will furnish a supplementary chapter, in which a few other passages bearing upon the general subject will be discussed.

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## CHAPTER II.

EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN WHICH THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM IS MENTIONED, AND RELATING TO EVENTS BEFORE THE CRUCIFIXION.

### I.

THE first set of passages which fall to be considered relate to the early days of the ministry of John the Baptist. The statements of all the four evangelists upon

this subject may be combined, and considered together. They are to be found in these passages,—Matt. iii. 1-16; Mark i. 1-11; Luke iii. 1-22; John i. 19-34; x. 40.

It will be sufficient for our purpose to quote a portion of each, leaving the reader to satisfy himself, by consulting the entire passages, that no point of importance is omitted in the examination.

“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”—MARK i. 4, 5.

“And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.”—LUKE iii. 15-17.

“They asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.” “The place where John at first baptized.”—JOHN i. 25-28; x. 40.

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.”—MATT. iii. 13-15.

“John saith, This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”—JOHN i. 29-34.

On these passages I make the following remarks:—

1. Two kinds of baptism are here distinguished, which may be called respectively water-baptism, and the baptism of the Spirit. Each of the evangelists in speaking of John’s baptism gives to it the general name; or if it is more particularly defined, it is spoken of as the baptism

of repentance. But it is particularly to be observed, that the Baptist himself, as recorded by all the four evangelists, expressly speaks of his baptism as baptism *with water*, and as in this respect distinguished from that of the Saviour, which was to be *with the Spirit*. The evangelist John, in his account of the Baptist's conference with the people, leads us to the conclusion, that however the name *baptism*, even without any addition, might be applied to that which had to do with water, this was by no means to be viewed as its whole or exclusive meaning. He was asked, "Why baptizest thou?" If thou art not the Christ, why dost thou assume His prerogative? John answers, "I baptize with water," as if he had said, I have not stepped out of my province. It is the Christ, no doubt, who is to baptize in the highest sense of the word. I, as His forerunner, baptize with water, He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost. And he carries the distinction throughout his address to them. What I am concerned to observe here is, that the name *baptism* is applied to two actions, or courses of action, separate and distinct; so much so, that an individual who performs the one, has not by any means trenched upon that ground which belongs to the other. As a corollary from this position, I observe, that,

2. The meaning of the name *baptism* must be found in something common to these two; or, to state it otherwise, baptism must include some idea which can be more or less perfectly realized by the application of water, and by the application of the Spirit. If water applied in a certain way, and the Spirit applied in a certain way, are both entitled to the name of baptism, then these applications must have something in common; and not only that, but the significancy of the name must lie in something common, of which they both partake. What that is, we are not here informed. Whether it is to be found in the mode of the application, its object, or the ends answered by it, this passage certainly does not declare. Let us therefore inquire whether the agency of water and the agency of the Spirit are ever brought into connection in other pas-

sages, and whether these point us to any idea as common to both. On consulting the Word of God, we find that they are brought together in other passages, as for instance:—

Isa. xliv. 3, 4—“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.” Here is a blessing promised in one clause as a pouring out of water; in the next, as a pouring out of God’s Spirit. Its object is described in the one as the thirsty and the dry ground; in the other, as the seed and offspring of Jacob. Its effect is the manifestation of a new or a revived life, described first, by the natural emblem of springing up, and secondly, by the actual fruit of the new birth, a surrender of self to the Lord. The idea which is here brought out as common to the outpouring of water and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is evidently a *reviving or life-producing power*. We know that water is an inanimate, insensate agent, which cannot otherwise produce effects than as it is guided and influenced by a will external to itself, while the Spirit of God is the maker of the universe, acting in accordance with the dictates of His own infinite wisdom. But we know that rain descends, and that the Spirit is sent down from heaven; that the descent of water is followed by the springing up of plants hitherto to all appearance dead, and that the imparting of the Spirit is followed by a new life, so that one says, I am the Lord’s; and another calls himself by the name of Jacob; and another subscribes with his hand unto the Lord, and surnames himself by the name of Israel (verses 4, 5). And therefore, we may say that the idea of a *reviving power* is common to both, though in a very inferior sense, no doubt, to be attributed to the material inanimate agent. Again:—

Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within



you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." One idea which is here brought out as common to water and to the Spirit, is that of *cleansing*. This passage contains a promise of cleansing, "Ye shall be clean," "I will cleanse you;" of complete and thorough cleansing, "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you;" and again (verse 29), "I will save you from all your uncleannesses." This cleansing is described, first, under the figure of the application of water to the person, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you;" and then as the gift of God's Spirit, "I will put my Spirit within you." What water is employed to do for the body, God's Spirit was to effect for the soul; or rather the reality was so far to exceed the significance of the emblem, that the operation of the Spirit was to produce not only a purified heart and a purified spirit, but one so effectually purified as to be not inappropriately styled *new*.

In the same connection may be viewed these expressions in the 51st Psalm: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Here there is no mention of water, but there is a reference to that operation which is commonly performed by means of water—namely, washing. The whole tenor of the Psalm shews that it is a spiritual cleansing that the Psalmist desiderates, and for spiritual mercies that he prays; but when he would describe this influence in language borrowed from the outward world, he can find none more appropriate than this—"Wash me, wash me thoroughly; cleanse me, purge me;" and from this we are entitled to conclude that the influence of God's Spirit resembles the operation of water in this respect, that it is a *cleansing*, or, in other words, that the idea of cleansing is, in a manner, common to water and to the Spirit.

From the foregoing remarks it will appear that these

two ideas are spoken of in Scripture as common to water and to the Spirit—namely, that of *cleansing* or purifying, and that of *reviving* (imparting or supporting life). These two may be combined, and then we have the complex idea of cleansing and reviving, or, in other words, removing defilement, and imparting freshness, and even life. This idea would be realized in the two kinds of baptism spoken of in the Gospels, if the one were found to be the application of water in such a way as to cleanse the object, to promote health, and inspire life, and the other such an application of the Spirit's influences as to remove spiritual defilement, and infuse and promote spiritual life. But on further examining the passages adduced, we find that the object is not to draw out an analogy between water and the Holy Spirit, but to set forth spiritual truths under the figure of natural; that water is spoken of not so much with a view to what it actually accomplishes, as rather with a view to suggest what the Spirit effects.

The prayer of the Psalmist is wholly for a spiritual cleansing, but it is for one so thorough that no emblem is too strong to set it forth. The promises in the prophets are of spiritual life, but so sure and vigorous, and in so unlooked-for quarters, that the most seasonable and copious supply of water is but a faint emblem of the Spirit which produces it. The Psalmist does not name the word water. The prophets, while they name it, merely speak of it as poured out, as sprinkled on. Their object is not to describe the result which would follow from such a bestowment of water; it is rather, by introducing the word, or referring to the operation of washing, to remind us of the kind of results which follow the gift of the Spirit. And from this we might infer that if water, instead of being merely spoken of in connection with spiritual truths, should ever be used in a religious rite, its use would be connected with spiritual rather than with material effects, and its intention rather to give us an emblem of what is done on the soul, than to accomplish a precisely similar effect on the object to which it is applied. This, there can be no doubt, was the great end of

the ablutions under the law of Moses, the design of which was not so much to cleanse outwardly the various persons and the various objects which were washed, as to point out by visible signs the importance which Jehovah attached to *inward purity*.

Now the baptism administered by John stands upon the same footing. In it water is employed in connection with spiritual truths; for he preached expressly "the baptism of repentance," and said to the people, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." So that the object of his baptism was not so much to wash the body as to point to the cleansing of the soul. His baptism was not an ultimate fact, to accomplish a result of its own, and by itself. It was a religious rite, deriving its significance from its reference to the spiritual baptism of Him who was to come. If, then, from a consideration of these things, I were asked to give a definition of *spiritual baptism*, I should call it *a cleansing and renewing of the soul by the Spirit of God*; but if to give a definition of the *water-baptism* of the text, I should call it not so much a cleansing and refreshing of the body, as rather *an application of water to the body so as to bring to view the cleansing and life-giving influence of the Spirit on the soul*.

That the idea of cleansing, real or figurative, enters into the meaning of the word baptize will further appear from the consideration that, in two of the evangelists, the expression *with fire* is added to the other with the Holy Ghost—fire being an agent also extensively employed in purifying or refining another class of substances. It calls up to the recollection the words of Malachi (iii. 1-3)—"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and

silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness." The messenger, in the first clause, is generally understood to point to John the Baptist. The Lord, the messenger of the covenant, next mentioned, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Here He is expressly described as being like a *refiner's fire*, and like *fuller's soap*—as being a *purifier*—one who is to purge the sons of Levi. It was this passage, perhaps, more than any other, which led the Jews to look for Messiah as a purifier, though they mistook the nature of the purification He was to accomplish. When they found John baptizing, they asked if he were the Christ; and from the questions put to him—Art thou the Christ? Why baptizest thou then?—the inference is obvious, that they would not have been surprised had the Christ appeared baptizing. If, as I have attempted to shew, the words *baptize* and *purify* are of similar import, the passage in Malachi accounts for their expectation; and the fact of this being the most natural explanation is a confirmation of what has been already advanced.

But the expression *with fire*, and the passage in Malachi, may furnish us with some additional light upon the nature of baptism. Christ was to purge the sons of Levi as gold and silver—that is to say, as with fire. Now, fire purges by *burning up the dross*, and thus leaving the metal in a refined state, free from impurities that formerly adhered to it, so that this purification includes the idea of *partial destruction*. If the gold is purged, the dross is consumed and burned up. And so, when the Baptist says of Christ, "He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost *and with fire*," he seems to intimate that the effusion of the Spirit will not be only for purification, but that this will be accompanied by a partial destruction. This destruction may be viewed either with regard to the individual or to the community. In the one case, it will point to the destruction of that in the individual which is sinful; in the other, to the destruction of those who increase unto more ungodliness. In the one case, the Spirit's influence will be viewed as not only enlightening the mind and renewing the will, elevating the affections and regulating the pas-

sions, but further as destroying and uprooting those sinful habits and propensities which have grown like an excrescence on the soul. In the other case, it will be viewed as not only bringing to some a savour of life unto life, but as bringing to others a savour of death unto death. To the second of these there seems to be an allusion in what is said of the trees without good fruit being cast into the fire, and of the chaff being burned up with unquenchable fire.

This idea of partial destruction is not peculiar to the expression *with fire*, but belongs as truly, though not perhaps so obviously, at first sight, to the other, *with water*. It is embodied in the *washing* and the *fuller's soap*, as truly as in the *burning* and the *refiner's fire*, the object in each case being to remove impurities, and separate them from that to which they adhere; and thus to purify at the expense of that which is removed. This idea, as connected with water, was brought out on a large scale at the deluge, in which destruction was combined with salvation. This is well put by Fairbairn in his *Typology*. Referring to the notice of the deluge in 1 Pet. iii. 20, he shews the apostle's meaning to have been that Noah and his family were saved—not *through* the waters, nor *from* the waters, but "*by water*," "from that, which, before the coming of the deluge, formed the real element of danger—the corruption, enmity, and violence of ungodly men." "It was to save him—and with him the cause of God—from this source of imminent danger and perdition, that the flood was sent; and it could only do so, by effectually separating between him and the seed of evil-doers,—engulphing *them* in ruin, and sustaining *him* uninjured in his temporary home. So that the deluge, considered as Noah's baptism, or the means of his salvation from an outward form of spiritual danger, was not less essentially connected with a work of judgment than with an act of mercy. It was by the one, that the other was accomplished." Again, "The deluge had a gracious, as well as a judicial aspect; and, by a striking combination of opposites, brought prominently out the principle, that *the*

*accomplishment of salvation necessarily carries along with it a work of destruction.*”—(*Typology*, Book II., chap. vi., sec. 2.)

3. Water-baptism is connected with the name of *John*, the baptism of the Spirit with the name of *Jesus*. This is an observation sufficiently obvious. These two baptisms are associated respectively with these two names. The passages do not teach us whether either of them would ever be shared in its administration by others or not, they simply tell us that John administers the one and Jesus the other.

4. The time for administering water-baptism was then *present*; the time for administering spiritual baptism was then *future*. “I *baptize* with water, He *shall* baptize with the Holy Ghost.” The most cursory reader will see that this is true as a simple matter of fact. “John *did* baptize in the wilderness.” He was then engaged in his work. Christ had not yet begun to baptize with the Spirit, for “the Spirit was not yet given.” So far all that we are at liberty to infer is, that the baptism of John began before that of Jesus. We can draw no conclusion as to their relation at a future period, or say whether or no they were ever to become contemporaneous, or whether and by what extent the duration of the one should exceed that of the other. But there are other expressions from which perhaps something further may be inferred, for,

5. There is a significancy in water-baptism as administered by John, which cannot attach to it in any period after his day. John says that he had come that the Christ might “be made manifest to Israel.” He was made manifest when on Him alone, of all the persons baptized by John, the Holy Ghost descended at His baptism; and He was pointed out to John so plainly that he could say confidently, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” John’s words are express—“That he should be made manifest to Israel, *therefore* am I come baptizing with water.” At *His* manifestation, the great end of John’s appearance as the Baptist was accomplished, and whoever should come baptizing with water

after him could not ground his exercise of the office upon the same reason.

But again, Jesus says to John, "Suffer it to be so now," Matt. iii. 15. Let the reader observe that the *now* of this sentence is an adverb of time, not a mere particle of emphasis. John has said to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" It were more fitting that thou the greater shouldst baptize me the inferior, than that I should baptize thee. What is the answer of Jesus? "Suffer it to be so now." He does not deny the doctrine that He being the greater should occupy the post of honour, and that John should sit at His feet and receive of His fulness. He does not deny that John has more need of a spiritual cleansing than he has of a bodily, but he says, "Suffer it to be so now." Your proposition, as if He had said, is true, but my request is fitting on this principle or for this reason that it is preferred *now*. I make a reasonable request, because I ask you *now* to baptize. The time may come when such a request would be out of place, but that time has not yet arrived. I have not yet assumed my office of baptizing with the Spirit, but you have entered upon your office. In my character of Lord and master it is fitting for me only to dispense gifts, but in my character as a man and a Jew, it becomes me to submit to every heaven-appointed ordinance while it is in force, and therefore "suffer it to be so now."

6. The expressions *baptize*, *baptism*, and *Baptist*, are used in these passages of water-baptism, and the person who administers it. John is called *the Baptist*. He is said to *baptize* the people, and they to come to his *baptism*, and to be *baptized* of him, and in all these cases water-baptism is that which is referred to. And yet, as we have seen, the same writers are careful to tell us that this is not the only baptism. How is it that they can afford to drop the distinguishing epithets which mark this to be water-baptism, and yet their narratives lose nothing in perspicuity? How is it that with all the pains they have been at to tell us water-baptism is not the only baptism, we still understand them by the simple word *baptize* to refer to water-baptism?

For this reason, that they are speaking of baptism as an existing fact, and their own narratives teach us that of the two kinds they had mentioned, water-baptism was the only one which then had a being. Till the time when the Spirit is given, they are safe in using the word *baptism*, even without an adjunct, as equivalent to water-baptism.

## II.

“After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized: for John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between *some* of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him.”—JOHN iii. 22-26.

“When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.”—JOHN iv. 1-3.

These passages confirm some of the conclusions deduced from those first considered. They shew that,

1. Water-baptism is spoken of as baptism simply. They confirm the conclusion that,

2. The word *baptize* is of similar import with *purify*. We read that “there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying.” We are prepared in a subsequent verse to hear what this question was. And what are we told? Why, that the Jews came to ask John about the respective claims of himself and another who was also baptizing. A question about baptism is therefore a question about purifying. But these passages further teach that,

3. Others besides John baptized with water, but Jesus did not. We saw formerly that the name of John was associated with water baptism, just as the name of Jesus was associated with spiritual baptism—that John administers the one, and Jesus the other. We see now that it would have been a wrong inference from this that no other shared with John the administration of water-



baptism, for the disciples of Jesus are here seen baptizing. As yet we have not been told whether the baptism of the Spirit is to be administered by Jesus alone, or ever to be shared with him by others. From anything that has appeared, it may be a part of that honour which belongs to Him alone and cannot be shared in by another, or it may be that He will associate others with Himself even in this work. On this point the words teach nothing, and leave it an open question. But they do teach that the baptism with water was administered by others as well as by John.

4. Jesus seems careful not to come into collision with John in regard to water-baptism. His ministry for a time resembles that of John, for He, too, preaches, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And it is followed up by a similar outward baptism. He tarries in Judea with His disciples, and baptizes. But we see that with all He is careful not to come into competition with John, for (1) He "himself baptized not, but His disciples," and (2) When He heard that this had come to the knowledge of the Pharisees, He departed into Galilee, and we do not read again of His baptizing during His earthly ministry. Thus is the name of John connected with water-baptism, as his appropriate work. He begins with baptizing with water. When the Messiah is to be baptized, he has the honour of administering the rite. Jesus refrains in person from administering it, and when the administering of it by His disciples after His teaching draws away individuals from baptism as administered by John, he withdraws to another part of the country. John is the only party whose baptism is distinguished in Scripture from that of Jesus, and then it is in such language as this, "I baptize with water, He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost."

## III.

Matt. xi. 2-15; Luke vii. 18-35; xvi. 16-18.

Of these passages it will be sufficient to quote the following portions:—

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”—MATT. xi. 11-15.

“I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.”—LUKE vii. 28-30.

“The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband, committeth adultery.”—LUKE xvi. 16-18.

The first of these passages is attended with difficulties, and hence some have been disposed to alter the translation, and read it, He that is *latest*, or *last*, in the kingdom of heaven, referring to Jesus himself or to His apostles, or he that is *less* to human appearance, that is Jesus, is greater than he. But these interpretations are forced, and by far the most natural rendering is that of the authorized version, “he that is *least*.” Accepting this as the true reading, I remark that,

1. Whatever be meant by the kingdom of heaven in this place, neither John the Baptist nor any of the Old Testament worthies had a place in it. John occupies a lower place than even the least in this kingdom, which is equivalent to saying, that he is not in it at all. The prophets before him occupied a still lower place, and are therefore still further removed from this kingdom of

heaven. It is hardly necessary to make the remark that the expression cannot mean the kingdom of grace, for that would be to exclude the father of the faithful, and the man after God's own heart, from a participation in its citizenship. It must point to the Gospel dispensation, the form which the kingdom of grace assumed when the day of shadows passed away, and Jesus Christ assumed the government as king over his own house. And this accordingly gives us a key so far to the date at which that kingdom, or that dispensation was set up. It shews that it was at all events posterior to John, and that the Baptist as really as Moses and the prophets belonged to the old and not to the new dispensation.

This is a point to which particular attention is solicited, because I make bold to affirm, that a great deal, if not of false reasoning, at least of misguided feeling, on the subject of water-baptism, has its origin in mistaken or confused ideas on this point. We are accustomed to draw a broad line between Malachi and Matthew, and to call what goes before this line the Old Testament, and what comes after it the New. And because what is recorded of the history of John, and of his baptism, falls in the latter division of the Word, the conclusion in many minds is that John is essentially a New Testament character, and hence that what was right in his days must be right still ; that since he administered water-baptism, and that to Jesus Christ himself, the ministers of the Gospel now are right in administering water-baptism to the disciples of Jesus. But if it can be shewn that the line is to be drawn, not at the birth of John or of Jesus, but at a point below the death of John ; that he is the last of an old, instead of the first of a new order of things ; that he belongs to a different economy from that under which we live,—there is room for entertaining the question, whether what was fitting in his time must necessarily be incumbent in ours.

2. In some respect, then, the meanest disciple in the new economy is greater than the most honoured servant of God, in the old. In what respect, this passage does

not state. It will not be maintained, that it is in the possession of faith, or any heavenly grace. He would be a bold person, indeed, who, after reading over the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, should affirm that the weakest disciple now was superior in these respects to all that are there named. But still, if the Scriptures be true, some respect there must be in which he is before them all. What can it be? To this question the general answer will perhaps be returned, that it is simply because he lives under a new dispensation, because he possesses a clearer revelation, and belongs to the dispensation of the Spirit. John, it will be said, was greater than the prophets before him, inasmuch as revelation was clearer, and further advanced, in his day, than in theirs. He was less than the least in the kingdom, because there yet remained clouds and darkness, which, on the fulfilment of events, cleared away. He was greater than the prophets, because he stood nearer to the break of day, and could see the first streak of morning light in the advent of Messiah. He was less than the humblest disciples in after ages, because he did not, like them, enjoy the full blaze of the Sun of Righteousness. Prophets could say, "*In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed,*" Dan. ii. 44. John could say, "*The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" But the humblest disciple now, can point to this *kingdom* as *actually set up* in the world, and rank himself in its citizenship.

All this is no doubt true, but yet it seems hardly to exhaust the full meaning of the context. We cannot suppose that Jesus would have said exactly the same of every individual who lived in the days of the Baptist, as he said of John himself. And yet the explanation just referred to would make his words equally true of any one then living. It is of John *the Baptist* that He speaks, John *the prophet* whom they had gone out into the wilderness to see; that is, a man who was exercising an office that was held by no other among them. And, therefore, we must view the words of the Saviour, as spoken with reference to

*John in his official character.* It is in this character that Jesus says of him, He is greater than all that have preceded him, he is less than the least of my disciples in the new economy. Let us look, therefore, a little at this. It may be easily understood, how John, in his official character, should be greater than the prophets before him. It will, perhaps, not be so readily admitted, that the followers of Jesus now should be greater than John. That he was greater than the prophets, lies, I conceive, in what he himself says, when he asserts that he came that the Messiah might be made manifest to Israel. Others spoke of Him ; he pointed Him out. Others held to Him the relation of *foretellers* ; he the relation of *forerunner*. Others predicted that He would be anointed, and sit as a priest upon His throne ; John administered that baptism which was immediately followed by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. But if this be the character in which John surpasses all that went before him, this must be the character, too, in which he is surpassed by those that come after. If it be in this that he is greater than every other prophet in the old economy, it must be in this that he is less than every disciple of the new. This gives us an exalted view of the New Testament economy, and shews us that every real disciple is intrusted with a mission more noble than John's. What that mission is, I stay not now to inquire. It will come to be more appropriately considered, in speaking of another passage. But I ask the reader to remember, that it is one higher in character than even that which was discharged by John, when he inaugurated the Saviour in the waters of Jordan, or when, pointing to Him, he said, "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me."

I pass now to the verses which follow, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force ; for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matt. xi. 12, 13) ; with the parallel passage, Luke xvi. 16, "The law and the prophets were until John ; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man

presseth into it." The translators of our English Bible have put in the margin, as another rendering for "suffereth violence," "is gotten by force," and these words, as well as the remarks of ordinary commentators, will be apt to leave an impression on the mind something to the following effect,—The Old Testament dispensation lasted till John appeared, but he *introduced a new one*. From his time not only was the kingdom of heaven set up, or the Gospel dispensation introduced, but multitudes eagerly sought, and actually obtained, a place in it. Now, if this be a correct interpretation of these words, the view I have taken of the verse above is utterly at fault, and John is to be regarded not as excluded from the Gospel dispensation, but as holding a very honourable position in it. On these verses I therefore remark that,

3. The expression *until John* (ὡς ἰωάννου, Matt. xi. 13, Luke xvi. 16), properly considered, includes John, and that the meaning of the words is that John belongs to that order of things described as the law and the prophets. This word *until* is the same that occurs in the preceding verse—"From the days of John the Baptist *until* now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," where the *now* following it is obviously included in the period referred to. The meaning plainly is, not that now there is any change, but that what had commenced with the days of John the Baptist was still continued, and now going on. Jesus does not mean to say, From the days of John the Baptist there has been great excitement with regard to this kingdom, but it has now subsided; but He means that the excitement which began then was still in existence when He spoke. In like manner, when He says, "All the prophets and the law prophesied *until* John," the natural meaning is, not that they ceased when John appeared, but that John took up a strain which had long been sounded, and falls to be ranked among the prophets.

The same word ὡς is to be found in Matt. i. 17, where it occurs three several times, and is by our translators rendered by the three several words *to*, *until*, and *unto*—

“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David *until* the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon *unto* Christ are fourteen generations.” The evangelist divides the genealogical table he has given in the preceding verses into three parts, each having fourteen names in it. The close of two of these divisions is marked by the name of a person, the close of the other by an epoch, and the same word *ἕως* is employed in each case. There has been some difference of opinion as to the manner in which the fourteen names are to be reckoned in each of the three periods. But, whatever mode be adopted, the name of David must be included in the first, and the name of Jesus Christ in the third, in order to make out the number fourteen, so that the word *ἕως*, *until*, in this verse, joined with the name of a person, signifies that that person *is included* in the subject described. There are fourteen names in the first division. This extends to *David*, he being the fourteenth (not the fifteenth). There are fourteen names from the carrying away to Babylon to *Christ*, He again being the fourteenth (not the fifteenth). Now, if we read the passage in the text in like manner, it will be, the prophets and the law prophesied *until John*, he being *the last prophet under the old economy*, not the first of a new.

4. The expression “the kingdom of God *is preached*” does not necessarily signify the kingdom of God *is set up*. The words are literally, the glad tidings of the kingdom are proclaimed, and these glad tidings must of course be defined by the facts of the case. The narratives of the evangelists tell us exactly what they were. John preached “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” Matt. iii. 2. Jesus began to preach “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” Matt. iv. 17. The twelve were instructed as they went to preach “the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” Matt. x. 7. And the seventy were sent out with the same instructions, “Say unto them, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you,” Luke x. 9-11. (The words in the original are the same as in the other passages, with the addition of *unto you*,

ἡγγικεν [ἐφ' ὑμᾶς] ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ.) This then formed the glad tidings which had been proclaimed from the days of John the Baptist, that the kingdom of heaven was *at hand, come nigh*, or in other words *soon to be set up*, not that it was actually in being. And accordingly Campbell thinks it "proper to remark that the form ἡγγικε γὰρ used first by the Baptist, then by our Lord himself, and lastly by His disciples in His lifetime, is never repeated after His resurrection. And," he adds, "we have reason to believe from material alteration in circumstances which then took place that they have then said not as formerly ἡγγικε, but ἤλθε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν—the reign of heaven, that is of the Messiah, *is come*." Thus the expression above referred to, instead of militating against our conclusion, when rightly considered, is found rather to support it; the preaching that it refers to being a proclamation to the effect that the new dispensation would shortly be brought in, not that it had been actually set up.

There still remains to be considered Matt. xi. 12, with the parallel passage in the last clause of Luke xvi. 16. How, it may be asked, can the kingdom of heaven suffer violence, or be gotten by force, before it is set up? how can the violent take it by force, or any man press into it, before it has a being? Do not these expressions imply that at the time in which the words were spoken the Gospel dispensation was in existence? I shall not insist upon the presumption that these words will be in accordance with the context, that if both the preceding and the succeeding verses teach that the Gospel dispensation was not then introduced, a verse teaching directly the contrary would hardly have been inserted between them.

But let us approach the subject more closely, and ask what is the real meaning of the passage before us. If it implies that the Gospel dispensation was actually in being, then how is it to be rendered consistently with this view? If it does, a consistent rendering may, perhaps, be a more difficult undertaking than would be at first imagined, for,



5. The verse seems to speak of a *hostile movement*, in which force is employed *for the overcoming of that which is opposed to it*. We do not read that the violent put aside their violence, and become peaceable citizens of this kingdom, but they take the kingdom by violence. And therefore on the supposition of the kingdom being before this time in existence, we should need to take the words as signifying that it was attacked, and wrested from the hands of its lawful king. If the words have to do with an actually existing kingdom, they have to do with it in the way of opposition. Force is spoken of throughout. A consistent interpretation would be one which should view this force as employed in overcoming the king, and not as yielding to his government. Unless therefore we are prepared to say that the Gospel dispensation was overthrown at its first commencement, and that the government, instead of being held by Jesus, was seized by those whose character shewed that they had no title whatever to it—unless we are prepared to say that before the Saviour left the world, others had seized upon that power which was His—I do not see that the supposition of a kingdom already established helps us out of the difficulties of the passage.

But to return to the view which was taken of the kingdom, as not yet set up, let us ask, is there anything in it inconsistent with the language of the evangelist in this verse? Would his language be absurd or unintelligible on this supposition? Would there be anything harsh, after reading the first half of the first chapter of Kings, in saying that the kingdom of Solomon was seized upon by Adonijah, although Solomon had not as yet sat upon his throne? And is there anything more harsh in saying that violence is used to the kingdom of Messiah, although Messiah as yet is not seated upon His throne? Adonijah attempted to obtain the kingdom of Israel, seized what he considered the favourable opportunity, and grasped at the reins of power. And because he did so, it was said “Adonijah reigneth.” Would it be an unwarranted stretch of language to say that the kingdom of heaven had been

taken by force, though nothing more than an attempt had been made to set up this kingdom, and to grasp at the reins of power before the king was crowned? The passage, I conceive, may be made to bear this rendering,—From the days of John the Baptist until now it has been announced and reiterated that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This idea has been grasped at by many, and, impatient of delay, they have sought to anticipate the Lord's time, and, setting themselves free from the restraints of the law, to realize the idea of the kingdom.

Whatever may be thought of this view, this much is certain, that there was much impatience with regard to the setting up of the kingdom ; that the disciples were for appropriating to themselves posts of authority in it, disputing who should be the greatest ; that the Saviour, on one occasion, as they approached to Jerusalem, saw fit to speak a parable to correct the impression that the kingdom of God should immediately appear ; while, even after the resurrection, they were still perplexed with the question, Will the Lord at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And this much also is certain, that upon one occasion at least, the people had formed the deliberate intention of setting up this kingdom on their own idea of it, for Jesus perceived that they would take Him by force and make Him a king. Now, if such sentiments dwelt in the breasts of the twelve, if such a purpose was formed by the crowd which had listened to the teaching of Jesus, it requires no great stretch of imagination to suppose that from the days of John the Baptist, other attempts may have been made to realize the idea of the kingdom by the aid of force.

This view is confirmed by what follows in the Gospel of Luke (xvi. 17). In his narrative the passage appears as an answer to the derisions of the Pharisees, and it is followed up by the words, "And [or rather *but*] it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Jesus tells us elsewhere that he came to fulfil the law, and that one jot or one tittle should in no wise pass from the law, till all were fulfilled, Matt. v.

17, 18; the meaning of which, as given by the best interpreters, is, that the dispensation of Moses would remain in full force till it was fulfilled in the dispensation of the Spirit—that the smallest commandments would be binding till it could be said, “It is finished.” But if the kingdom of heaven had been established, if the new economy had already commenced, then the law had passed away, and there was no room for such a sentence as this, “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” On the other supposition these words are the natural following up of the Saviour’s discourse. Jesus on this view has just said, Violent attempts are made to realize the idea of the kingdom, and now adds, “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” You may seek, as if He had said, to anticipate God’s time, and in default of obedience ease your consciences by the reflection that you are entering upon a new era, and that the shackles of the law are broken. But it will be in vain, for one tittle of the law shall not fail. It is still in force, and so long as that is the case you are amenable to its requirements, and the full tale will be demanded of you.

And perhaps yet another confirmation may be derived from the next verse, “Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.” On the common view its connection with the context is by no means apparent. It may be regarded as a specimen of the law, one commandment selected by way of example, and perhaps pointing to the practices of the Pharisees, to remind them that not only the law in general, but this precept in particular, was binding, and that in vain would they try to escape from its obligations. Still, it may be asked, how is it that this precept is selected? When Jesus has spoken of the *smallest tittle* as binding, how is it that the instance which he adduces relates to one of the *graver matters* in which men offend? Does this commandment, as an example, enforce his position; or might it not be said,

though so great a commandment should stand, yet there are others much smaller which may fall? Is there no other view which may be taken of the passage? In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle says that "The law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth," or as it liveth, but that just as a woman is relieved from the law of marriage on the death of her husband, and left at liberty to marry another, so a man is relieved from the law of Moses upon the death of that law, or by his death to that law through Christ. And he speaks of the Romans becoming dead to the law that they might be married to Christ. Recollecting that this is an inspired application of the marriage relationship, I conceive it possible that Jesus Christ himself, in introducing that subject in immediate connection with what He has said upon the law and the Gospel, might have in view a similar application, and that His intention might be to enforce this truth, that for those who were under the law to leave its precepts for what a capricious fancy had set up as the kingdom of heaven, was to commit an act of spiritual adultery, and prove unfaithful to Him who had ordained the law: and then that when the time should come that this law had served its end, and was put away, for any to take it upon themselves, under the plea of fulfilling God's requirements, would be again an act of spiritual adultery, a want of allegiance to their Lord Jesus Christ, who had set them free from the law. This agrees with what has been advanced on this point.

It will not be necessary to add much upon the closing words of the passage in the seventh chapter of Luke (verses 29, 30), which speak of the effect of the words of Jesus upon the hearers. The plain meaning seems to be, that those who had been baptized by John gave their assent to what had been said of his character and office, while those who had not received his baptism, being either too proud to ask it, or too self-righteous to obtain it, refused their assent, and rejected the words of Jesus, testifying against themselves as it did.

I shall now sum up what has been said by giving a

connected paraphrase of the two passages, taking Matt. xi. 11-15, and Luke vii. 28-30, as one, and regarding Luke xvi. 16-18 as spoken in a different connection. The first may be paraphrased thus :—Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, who appears as the forerunner of Messiah, and the herald of His kingdom. Notwithstanding, the weakest disciple in the new economy shall have a more honourable office assigned to him than even that of John. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, violent attempts have been made to bring in the new economy, and the violent seek by force to accomplish this. For with John the last of the Old Testament prophets has appeared, and if ye will receive it, this is He who was foretold to come in the spirit and power of Elias. Then the multitude generally and the publicans hearing these things, assented to their truth, and confessed that God's Word was vindicated in the appearance of John ; for they had before this acknowledged his mission by receiving his baptism. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected these sayings, which came home to them and condemned their conduct ; for they had not been baptized of John. And the other passage as follows :—

The law and the prophets were until John : since that time the glad tidings have been proclaimed that the Gospel economy is about to be introduced. And there is a general attempt to effect its introduction, if even by force, and thus to put away the requirements of the law. But such attempts must fail ; for it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle to pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever of you disobeys the law, so long as he is under its dominion, or so long as its authority is binding, is guilty of spiritual adultery. He is unfaithful to that God who spake by Moses. And whosoever shall seek by the law to be made perfect, after its purpose has been fulfilled, and the liberty of the Gospel has been introduced, shall likewise be guilty of spiritual adultery, being unfaithful to me, his Lord and Master.

## IV.

"And *when they come* from the market, except they wash [baptize], they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, *as* the washing [baptism] of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. . . . For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing [baptism] of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do."—MARK vii. 4, 8.

"And when the Pharisee saw *it*, he marvelled that he had not first washed [baptized] before dinner."—LUKE xi. 38.

In both of these passages we have the verb βαπτίζω. In the second we have also a noun from the same root, not the one by which we find baptism generally designated, βάπτισμα, but the less usual form, βαπτισμός. As this latter word is never applied in Scripture, either to the ritual baptism of John, or the spiritual baptism of Jesus, it is not to be regarded as a technical term (like βάπτισμα), such as might in the course of time have acquired a conventional meaning distinct and separate from its original acceptation, but must be viewed as expressing the average force of the root. Its occurrence in this place may, therefore, assist us in some measure in ascertaining the proper force of the verb βαπτίζω; and the true idea of which the noun βάπτισμα is the expression. The translators of our English Bible seem to have had no misgivings as to the meaning, for they have rendered the verb, *wash*, and the noun, *washing*, and given us no alternative readings in the margin. Their opinion seems to have coincided with that formerly expressed, that the word *baptize* is of similar import with *purify* or *cleanse*.

The baptisms referred to in these passages are different both from the water-baptism of John and from the baptism of the Spirit. They may perhaps be viewed like the former, as partaking to a certain extent of the ritual or ceremonial, and pointing to a higher cleansing. But, unlike it, they are to be regarded as effecting, in a lower and earthly sphere of operation, an actual washing. The baptism of John in itself, and without reference to a spiritual effect, could scarcely be

called a cleansing of the subject baptized. The baptisms here spoken of, whatever be their higher reference, seem to include in themselves the idea of a real washing, and, in some cases, as in those of the cups and tables, impart that kind of cleanliness of which alone the subject is capable. It is in this latter view, as being actual washings, though of course only of an outward nature, that they will call for any further remarks. If, then, these baptisms are washings, the conclusion is confirmed that into the baptism of John, and the baptism of the Spirit too, the idea of cleansing must, in some sense, enter.

The advocates of immersion have attempted to shew that in the above passages *immersion* is the thing indicated by the baptizing, and that we should read, "Except they *bathe*, they eat not," "The *immersing* of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables," "He marvelled that he had not first *bathed* before dinner." Into the merits of this view I do not mean to enter. I have one simple remark to make upon it, which will be sufficient for the present purpose, and that is, that if it were to be substantiated, it would not destroy the assertion that the idea of cleansing is involved in the meaning of baptism. Supposing that there was a complete immersion in every instance in which the word is employed in these passages, we must necessarily regard these as immersions *with a view to cleanliness*. It was the *unwashed*, ἀνίπτους (not the unbaptized), hands of the disciples which attracted the attention of the Pharisees, and gave occasion for the introduction of the observations of Mark upon the baptisms referred to. And therefore it is no unwarrantable conclusion, that these baptisms were for the purpose of washing or cleansing. And the remarks of the Saviour in the Gospel by Luke bear upon the same point. The marvel of the Pharisee at His conduct gives Him occasion to say, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean (*purify*, καθαρίζετε) the outside of the cup and the platter;" from which we infer that the difference in the practice of the Pharisees, and in the practice of Jesus, related to a *purification* at-

tended to by the former, and neglected by the latter. But the difference is expressed in these words, "He had not *baptized* before dinner," from which the natural inference is, that the baptism to which the Pharisee attributed so much importance, in whatever mode performed, was a species of cleansing or purifying.

## V.

## "JOHN THE BAPTIST."

Matt. xiv. 2, 8.

Mark vi. 14, 24, 25.

,, xvi. 14.

,, viii. 28.

Luke ix. 19.

,, xvii. 13.

## "THE BAPTISM OF JOHN."

Matt. xxi. 25,

Mark xi. 30.

Luke xx. 4.

These are specimens of two classes of passages, in one of which the name *Baptist* is ascribed to John, in the other that fact is referred to from which this name takes its origin, *the baptism of John*. They do not serve to throw any additional light upon the meaning of the word baptize, but the frequency with which both expressions occur, serves to confirm us in these two positions,—1. That baptism was essentially John's work ; and, 2. That John was essentially a baptizer. The two may seem identical, though they are not really so. In the one it is affirmed that baptism belonged to John, as it did to no other. In the other, that no view of John will be complete which does not take into account the fact of his baptism. When I say that baptism was essentially John's work, I mean that it was his in a sense in which it was not Peter's nor Paul's. When I say that John was essentially a baptizer, I mean that he was not only a prophet, or a messenger, but also John the Baptist.

Some remarks have already been made under former passages upon John's baptism. This may be a convenient opportunity for reconsidering the subject, and stating briefly in what this baptism consisted. Two features particularly seem to have characterised it. (1.) It was



baptism "with water." This we have already seen. When asked why he baptized though he was not the Christ, his justification he bases upon this, "I baptize *with water*." When stating the great end of his office, he affirms, "Therefore am I come baptizing *with water*." When declaring the way in which the Christ was made known to him, he says, "He that sent me to baptize *with water*, the same said unto me." (2.) It was baptism "unto repentance," Matt. iii. 11, Mark i. 4, Luke iii. 3. When men came in crowds to his baptism, he warned them against trusting to external privileges, saying, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for *repentance*." Years after, it is referred to by this name, "John preached before his coming *the baptism of repentance*," Acts xiii. 24; "John verily baptized with *the baptism of repentance*," Acts xix. 4. These two characters, then, seem to have belonged to the baptism of John. By the first it is distinguished from the baptism of Jesus: "I baptize with water, He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost." By the second it is distinguished from some of the ablutions of the Mosaic economy, and more particularly from the baptisms "of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables," held by "the tradition of men;" for Pharisees whose heart was far from God practised *those*, Mark vii. 4, 6, 8, but were not baptized with *this*, Luke vii. 30. A full definition of John's baptism must include both of these characters, and might therefore be expressed thus, a baptism with water, in which the subject is called upon to exercise repentance.

## VI.

"Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father."—MATT. XX. 22, 23.

"Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they say unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto

them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.”—MARK x. 38-40.

“I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”—LUKE xii. 50.

These passages may be conveniently considered together. The first two refer to the same incident, while the third is strictly parallel, all speaking of a baptism with which Jesus was to be baptized. To ascertain what is meant by this baptism, let us examine the context. In the one case it is conjoined with a cup to be drunk of. Elsewhere Jesus prayed in an agony, and just before His betrayal: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” Matt. xxvi. 39; and when He was surrounded by His enemies, and Peter wished to defend Him, He said, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” John xviii. 11. In these instances He obviously referred to His *sufferings*. It is natural to suppose that in the case before us he refers to the same. In the other passage, Luke xii. 50, He says, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” Here He speaks as if some great end were to be effected, which could not be carried out till this baptism was over. His language is similar to what He uses in another place: “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you,” John xvi. 7. Here the coming of the Spirit is made to hinge upon the departing of Jesus, just as in the passage before us the freer and more effectual working of Jesus is made to hinge upon the baptism to be accomplished. But this more effectual working was to be by the Spirit, for Jesus speaks of Him as the Agent through whom communications were to be made to the disciples, which could not be imparted by Himself during His personal ministry, John xvi. 12, 13. The coming of the Spirit thus implies the removal of those influences which stood in the way of the progress of the kingdom, and when He was come, Jesus would be no longer straitened.

But if this be so, then the baptism which is necessary to the removal of these straits, and the departing of Jesus which is necessary to the coming of the Spirit, may be regarded as synchronizing, or very nearly so, if not as pointing to exactly the same events. Now the departing was to be by a cruel death ; the baptism, therefore, must be in some way connected with this death.

Hence the common view is, that the baptism in each of the above-named cases refers to the prospective *sufferings* of the Saviour. If a distinction is to be drawn between the cup and the baptism, it may be something such as indicated by Alford, when he says, "It (the cup) here seems to signify more the *inner* and spiritual bitterness, resembling the agony of the Lord himself,—the baptism more the *outer* accession of persecution and trial,—through which we must pass to the kingdom of God."—(*Greek Testament*, on Matt. xx. 22.)

Assuming it as generally agreed, that there is a reference to the sufferings of Jesus, the question presents itself, Why should these sufferings be denominated a baptism ? What is the link to connect this with the baptisms that have already been considered ? One party finds a ready answer in its favourite idea of immersion, and maintains that the meaning is, that the Saviour was to be *encompassed* with sufferings ; that His sufferings are called a baptism because they were so *overwhelming*,—because all God's waves and His billows went over Him (Psalm xlii. 7),—because He came into deep waters where the floods overflowed (Psalm lxix. 2). The same view is taken by many who do not hold to the practice of immersion. Thus Alford, on Luke xii. 50, says, "The symbolic nature of Baptism is here to be borne in mind.—*Baptism = Death*. The figure in the sacrament is the *drowning*,—the *burial* in the water of the *old man*, and the *resurrection* of the *new man*. The Lord's baptism was *His death*, in which the body inherited from the first Adam was buried, and the new body raised again." And the Psalms quoted above are referred to by the same writer, as bearing upon the subject.

This explanation leaves out of sight the idea which, in examining an earlier passage, I was led to consider the leading one in the meaning of baptism—namely, that of cleansing or purifying; a cleansing which may be accompanied by a partial destruction, just as the same process which refines and purifies the metal, burns up and destroys the dross which is mixed with it. It is not, on this account, necessarily to be rejected. We find in the use of language, that words often acquire secondary meanings, in which all trace of the original idea is lost sight of. Supposing that the word baptism meant originally cleansing, but that this cleansing was ordinarily effected by immersion, it would not be unparalleled to have a new application of the word, in which the idea of cleansing was dropped, and only that of immersion appeared. At the same time, I am not sure that this principle need here be resorted to for explanation, or that it is necessary to look beyond the primary idea for a reason of the application of the name to the sufferings of Jesus.

I have said that the baptism of the Spirit was called baptism with fire, partly because it is purifying, and partly because it is accompanied by partial destruction, the destruction of that which is sinful in the individual, and of those who continue sinful in the community. Now, it is true that Jesus being holy, harmless, and undefiled, there was no sin in Him from which to be purified, nothing sinful to be destroyed. He was perfectly holy, and could not be made more so. But as the representative of His people He became head of a body, the sins of which must be expiated, *purged out*. And thus even the Captain of their salvation was *made perfect* through suffering, Heb. ii. 10; and “though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being *made perfect*, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him,” Heb. v. 8, 9. Though perfect God and perfect man before His sufferings, yet through these sufferings He was *perfected as a redeemer*, and without them He could not have taken away sin. By His death the fountain was opened for sin and for uncleanness, and a

healing, sanctifying, purifying influence flows to His people. Then, though there was nothing sinful in Him to be destroyed, yet, as bearing the sins of others, He was made answerable for them. He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of God's people was He stricken. His soul was made an offering for sin, and He bare the sins of many, Isaiah liii. He was made sin for us. His sufferings were the penalty of sin, or that which in the eye of the law was regarded as equivalent to this. I would thus regard the sufferings of Jesus as a baptism, not because He was *immersed* in them, or buried in them, but because He was *perfected* by them as the great Mediator between God and man, because in the scheme of redemption they constitute a main part of that economy by which those sins which He bare in His own body to the tree were *purged out*.

It may be objected to this view that disciples are said to share in this baptism, and though the sufferings of Jesus were expiatory theirs were not. In answer to this I adduce the words of Paul, when he says, "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church," Col. i. 24. The sufferings of Paul were not expiatory any more than those of James and John. But yet he speaks of himself as filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. His meaning probably is, that as Jesus through suffering was perfected as a mediator, so Paul through suffering was perfected as a member of His body, and a preacher of His word; that though the sufferings of the apostle could not expiate sin, they might yet commend that Gospel which he believed; and that persecution and affliction were the school in which he was trained for greater usefulness, and enabled to bring others to the cleansing fountain. But if in this sense his sufferings could be said to fill up what was behind of the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake, in this sense too James and John might be said to be baptized with the baptism of Jesus, though their sufferings were not, like His, expiatory. Through suffering He was perfected as a mediator. In the school

of suffering they were perfected, or at least purified as disciples. They became possessed of deeper humility, and larger faith, and stronger love. James sealed his testimony with his blood. John bore his testimony amidst trials and persecutions even to an extreme old age.

The result, then, of this examination is, that while retaining the idea of baptism as that which purifies, there is a baptism of suffering distinct from those already referred to—in the case of the Saviour fitting Him for being the substitute; in the case of His disciples making them more perfect followers of Christ. I have called it a distinct baptism from the others. It is convenient to regard it so; at the same time, its relation to the proper baptism of the Spirit must not be forgotten. It may be said to result from the opposition which the baptism of the Spirit meets with from the evil of the world. Jesus Christ was sealed and set apart for the work of redemption, and in Him the Spirit dwelt without measure. It was His perfect holiness which called forth the enmity of men, and drew upon Him those sufferings which were inflicted by them. His disciples possess a measure of His Spirit, and so are made *conformable to His death*, being exposed to opposition in proportion as they testify against the deeds of a sinful world. To Him the baptism of suffering was at once that which a nature filled with the Spirit—and because it was filled with the Spirit—drew upon itself from a world lying in wickedness, and at the same time the means which God ordained whereby, by one offering, He might perfect for ever them that are sanctified. To them the baptism of suffering is at once the result of men's hatred of a character baptized by the Spirit, and at the same time the training in passing through which they attain still greater spirituality.

## CHAPTER III.

EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN WHICH THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM IS MENTIONED, AND RELATING TO EVENTS AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION, BUT BEFORE THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

## I.

WE come now to the well-known words of the commission,—

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into\* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”—MATT. xxviii. 19.

From the foregoing evidence it appears that four different baptisms are spoken of in the preceding portion of the Gospels, which may be described as follows:—1. An outward washing or cleansing, as of the person before meals, or of furniture, according to the tradition of the elders. 2. Water-baptism in connection with spiritual truths, or an application of water to the body, so as to bring to view the cleansing and life-giving influence of the Spirit on the soul. 3. The baptism of the Spirit, or the operation of the Spirit, so as to cleanse and renew that which submits to its influence, and to consume and destroy that which opposes it. 4. A baptism of suffering, in which intense pain is submitted to by the subject. We naturally expect that the word baptize, as here employed, will have one or other of these meanings. If Jesus uses it in a sense altogether new, His language should explicitly state, or certainly imply this. If His words do not intimate as much, we expect to find it used as formerly.

\* In this and one or two other passages I have adopted as the translation of the words *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*, not the rendering of the authorized English version, *in the name*, but, as sanctioned by the best Greek scholars, the rendering, *into the name*. Where I have retained the words *in the name*, the preposition in the original is not *εἰς*, but *ἐν* or *ἐν*, as in Acts ii. 38; x. 48.

But from a number of meanings which are we to choose? There may be circumstances which exclude one or more, and shew that in the particular instance it or they cannot be intended. In this instance such is the case. Two of the meanings are at once seen to be inadmissible—the first and the fourth. The first is excluded for this reason—that the baptism is in connection with spiritual truths, “Go, and *teach* all nations, baptizing them.” Whatever it be, it is not a mere outward washing, for the purpose of cleansing the body. The mission on which the Saviour sends His disciples is something higher in character than the effecting of a mere sanatory reform. The fourth is equally excluded. Though Jesus came to send fire and a sword on the earth, this is rather an indirect consequence of His doctrine, by reason of the opposition it meets with, than its effects upon those who receive it. He now inculcates a discipling, a baptizing, and a teaching. While His office is in part destructive, it is so, not to those who receive Him, but to those who reject Him. But if there is to be a discipling of the nations, a baptizing of the disciples, and a teaching of the baptized, the baptism cannot be a destruction, or the inflicting of intense suffering. Adherence to the doctrines which the disciples were to preach may be followed by exposure to suffering, but it cannot be of the essence of their commission to inflict suffering upon the very individuals who receive their teaching, and submit to their doctrines.

There remain, therefore, for our choice, only the second and third meanings—namely, baptism with water, as a religious rite, and the baptism of the Spirit. To many readers the former of these will appear necessarily to follow from some of the positions to which we have already arrived, as well as from other considerations. The

#### ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF A RITUAL RENDERING OF THE COMMISSION,

so far as I have been able to meet with them, are as follows: that, 1. We must have some initiatory rite of



Christianity, and there is no other rite to claim this place. 2. The simple name of baptism is given to that which was administered by John, and in which water was employed, while the other we have never found spoken of without the adjunct, *with the Spirit*. 3. The disciples of Jesus administered water-baptism during the Saviour's own ministry, but the baptism of the Spirit is not attributed to any one but Himself. 4. The baptism of the Spirit was confined to the first ages of the Church, and ceased a few years after Pentecost; and, 5. That mortals should administer spiritual baptism is impossible. These, if I mistake not, are the main strongholds of water-baptism, the principal arguments on which its defenders would rest its advocacy. I proceed, therefore, to examine them in detail.

1. There must be some initiatory rite or ordinance in the New Testament economy, and there is no other to claim this place. This statement may be resolved into these two, which it will be convenient to consider separately. 1. It is necessary that we have some rites in the Church; and, 2. Baptism with water is the initiatory rite.

(1.) *It is necessary that we have some rites in the Church.* This point I might perhaps have passed over in silence, as not here calling for remark. An ordinance must be based evidently not upon abstract considerations of the fitness or necessity of things, but upon the revealed Word of God. If it is distinctly laid down in Scripture, then we may be sure that it is wisely ordered, and that its tendency will be beneficial, even if we should not perceive the evidence of this. If it is not contained in Scripture, then no reasonings of ours can make it out to be necessary, for this would be to affirm that man was wiser than God, and had detected something essential, which Deity had overlooked. Whatever, therefore, may be said upon this point, it can never settle the question. The appeal, after all, must be to Scripture. At the same time, as it is a circumstance which weighs with some minds, it may be well to examine it particularly.

The statement, so far as I am aware, is based upon the

following considerations, — the imperfection of human nature, the practice of men in other matters, and the analogy of God's dealings in earlier dispensations.

[1.] An argument for ceremonies is sometimes based upon the ground of man's imperfection. Thus Whately—“Mankind are not formed to live without ceremony and form: the ‘inward spiritual grace’ is very apt to be lost without the ‘external visible sign.’ . . . . *Ceremony* and form of every kind derive their necessity from our imperfection. If we were perfectly spiritual, we might worship God without any form at all, without even uttering words; as we are not, it is a folly to say, ‘One may be just as pious on one day as another, in one place or posture as another,’ &c. I answer—Angels may; men cannot.”—(*Annotations on Bacon's Essays*, p. 481.)

By imperfection, I presume, is intended weakness of spiritual apprehension. The argument, as I take it, is that man cannot so directly and immediately perceive the spiritual as angels can, and therefore he must have helps which they can dispense with. But if this be the argument, we must be careful to distinguish what are the kind of helps which it contemplates. It is attempted here to push the opponent of ceremonies to an absurdity. “If we were perfectly spiritual, we might worship God without any form at all, without even uttering words.” The uttering of words is thus included among the forms which the perfectly spiritual might dispense with. And as man cannot dispense with them, the argument is held to be good in all its extent, and to necessitate a ritual worship.

Now, language may degenerate into a form. But so long as words are simply the expression of thought, they are not to be regarded as formal. They are the means by which mind communicates with mind, and *if men were as spiritual as angels*, they would not therefore be raised above the necessity of using words, or some corresponding means of giving expression to thought. The worship which angels render to God is not all mute. It is at least in part vocal. At creation “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” Job

xxxviii. 7. And among other revelations made to the beloved disciple, we read, "I beheld, and I heard *the voice of many angels* round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; *saying with a loud voice*, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "And *all the angels* stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and *worshipped God*, *saying*, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. v. 11, 12; vii. 11, 12. Angelic spirituality is not inconsistent with praising God with the voice. But angelic spirituality is admitted to be independent of ceremonies. To say, therefore, that Christianity does not sanction the use of ceremonies in religion, does not reduce us to the absurdity of maintaining that there can be no vocal worship.

But how stands the case with what are properly called ceremonies? Is there a necessity in our nature for a symbolical worship? Human nature has many imperfections. This is an acknowledged fact. But it is worthy of notice that the demands which God makes upon man are not therefore abated. "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment," Mark xii. 29, 30. The apostolic injunction is, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy," 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. The words of the great Teacher are, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Matt. v. 48. The highest standard is set before us. The pattern of our obedience is Jesus Christ, who "also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither

was guile found in His mouth," 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. Man is to aim at perfection, and nothing short of it comes up to the requirements of God. The remedy which He has provided for the sinner has not diminished the perfection of the law. On the other hand, the Redeemer has magnified the law, and made it honourable.

Further, the most unbounded assistance is promised to prayer. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Luke xi. 9, 10, 13. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him," James i. 5.

Again, Scripture seems to contemplate a time when the Church shall be perfect. "Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more," Joel iii. 17. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," Rev. xxi. 27.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The assistance of the Spirit is unlimited, or limited only by the bounds of our prayers. The Bible is given for the express purpose "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 17. But if this be so, it is not an adequate objection to any representation of Gospel-worship, that it is more spiritual than what men generally are prepared to receive. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." That most men should regard it as too spiritual, only proves what is patent from other evidence, that most men are in a state of nature. It is a confirmation of the melancholy fact, that there are few who have rightly apprehended this spi-

ritual service, and should lead those who have, to double their diligence, to labour and pray that they may be renewed day by day, not to go about to establish a righteousness of their own by the introduction of a ritual worship. The experiment of ritual worship has been tried on a large scale. It answered the purpose for which it was established, but it has failed to effect a radical change in human nature. And "there is verily a *disannulling* of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." It is too much to say that a spiritual religion—a religion without ceremonies—must fail, because not agreeable to fallen human nature. It is the old story of the manna in the wilderness. "Man did eat angels' food," Ps. lxxviii. 25. But they lusted for the flesh-pots of Egypt, they "tempted God in the desert. And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls," Ps. cvi. 14, 15. God has offered man a spiritual religion. But he longs for a ritual. He gets or takes it, and with this, spiritual poverty and barrenness.

But perhaps by perfectly spiritual is meant *only spiritual*, spiritual and not material. If this be the meaning, the argument will be—man is possessed of a complex nature, consisting of *body* and soul; and there is therefore, in the fact of his *human constitution*, a call for *bodily exercise*, as well as spiritual communion. A purely spiritual religion cannot, therefore, be intended for him. The argument is good so far, that a religion for a human being may be expected to call for the exercise of all his powers. The worship of a creature possessed of this composite nature, it may be expected, will not be all internal, but partly external, will not be confined to the feelings, but find expression also in action. It does not, however, follow that religion must be therefore ceremonial, for God has in another way provided for this necessity of man's nature. There is an embodiment of religion in action, but the acts in which it clothes itself are not ceremonial, but moral. "Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father,

is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world," James i. 27. But on this view of the subject, see below, pp. 57, 58, &c.

[2.] An argument for ceremonies in religion is sometimes based upon the practice of men in other matters. It is observed that institutions, and associations, and confederacies among men, have their badges. Not only is there a uniform for the army, but separate regiments have their individual badges. Each nation has its distinguishing flag. Freemasons have their conventional signs, and their initiatory ceremonies. Temperance societies have something of the same sort, and doubtless the principle is carried out in other quarters. From this it is inferred that there is a felt necessity—a necessity which men generally have recognised—for forms of one kind or another. To this I reply, that there is a broad distinction between merely human institutions and the Christian Church. Those do not profess to go deeper than the outward conduct—this concerns itself with the heart. He is considered a good soldier who obeys orders, who is regular at drill and parade, who carries arms at the word of command, who goes through a course of routine in a prescribed mode, or who successfully storms a fort, or cuts down an enemy, whatever be the ruling motive of his conduct. But the soldier of the Cross must have a new heart. His actions must spring from right motives. The moving principle of his conduct must be love to Christ. That the one is known mainly by his outward trappings, by the number or the badge of his regiment, is no reason why there should be anything similar in the case of the other. The aim of the one is to serve an earthly master, and there may be a reason why that master should put an outward badge on his servant. The aim of the other is to serve a heavenly master; but He "seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart," 1 Sam. xvi. 7. If there be any analogy at all in the two cases, it would lead to the conclusion, that while the one is careful to have the

proper facings on his coat, the great object of concern with the other should be to have his heart right with God. Similar remarks might be made upon other institutions of human origin.

[3.] A more plausible argument is founded on the analogy of God's dealings in earlier dispensations. We are reminded that, in earlier times, every covenant of which we read as made between God and man, had its appropriate sign and seal. "God never made a covenant yet without a seal. The tree of life was the seal of Adam's covenant, the rainbow was the seal of Noah's, circumcision was the seal of Abraham's, and baptism is the seal of Christ's."—(M'Crie on *Baptism*, p. 10.) To this some add, that to the covenant of grace in its first form, as made with Adam, "the sign of the sacrifice of the lamb was annexed" (see *Edinburgh Christian Magazine* for February 1852), and that this, as well as circumcision, was incorporated with other signs in the Mosaic dispensation.

The covenants referred to, with their respective signs, do not all stand upon the same plane, and, therefore, in considering the argument, a line must be drawn so as to distinguish things that differ. The covenant of works has to do not with a different economy, but with a different state, a state of innocence, and therefore little or nothing can be inferred from the fact of a sign being attached to it. The sign too, differs materially from those which are contended for in the Christian Church. The tree of life may be called a sign or symbol of that life which was to be the reward of obedience, a standing comment on the text, *This do, and thou shalt live*. But as far as the record goes, there was *no symbolical act* required of our first parents, in connection with it. A general charge was given to the man to keep the garden and dress it, but no special injunction is spoken of as relating to this tree. Only, when he has sinned and broken the covenant, he is driven out of the garden, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life."

The next covenant was made not with the Church,

but with the world. Noah here stands as the representative of man generally. The rainbow is the pledge of God's promise, the seal attached by Him to the covenant. But here again, the attaching of this seal calls for no symbolical act on the part of man. The promise of God is not affected by the conduct of His creature, but whatever that be, the bow spanning the heavens is the pledge that He will make His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and on the unjust, that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease," Gen. viii. 22. The bow in the cloud is a natural phenomenon, and, whether man keeps in mind the covenant or not, will appear, so long as the constitution of nature remains as it is. But it is different with the so-called rites of the Christian religion. They are dependent upon the acts of man for their very existence. Baptism with water requires a subject and an administrator, as well as an outward sign. The first two are as needful as the last, and only when all three unite; is there the rite.

The covenant with Abraham, again, is the covenant of grace, but it is that covenant as suited to the two dispensations, the dispensation of the law, and the dispensation of the Spirit. That the sign of circumcision was attached to it when given to Abraham does not prove that a sign must always be attached to it. As spoken to him, the covenant had respect to a carnal as well as a spiritual seed, to an earthly as well as a heavenly Canaan. And it was in keeping with this that it should have attached to it a ritual as well as a spiritual seal. But the carnal seed has merged in the spiritual, for "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 29. The earthly Canaan has merged in the heavenly, for the inheritance spoken of in the New Testament is "the eternal inheritance," "the inheritance of the saints in light," "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved in heaven*," Heb. ix. 15; Col. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 4. And if so, the sign



may well merge in the Spirit. The covenant, as it now stands, is not with the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, but with those who are Abraham's children by faith, Rom. iv. 13, 16. It is a promise not of an earthly Canaan, but of a heavenly inheritance, "the promise of the Spirit through faith," Gal. iii. 14; of "an inheritance in Christ," Eph. i. 11. And therefore the seal by which the covenant is ratified, is not a ritual, but a spiritual one—"ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession," Eph. i. 14. So long as Abraham's seed in the flesh were specially interested in the covenant, so long might a carnal sign be attached to it. But when an apostle can say, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, . . . but he is a Jew which is one inwardly," he can add, "Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: . . . circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii. 28, 29.

As to the covenant or promise of an atonement made to Adam, I shall not insist upon the fact that it is nowhere said in Scripture, that to it "the sign of sacrifice was annexed." Granting that it was, this promise occupies a similar position to the covenant with Abraham. The promise to Adam contained the germ of the covenant of grace. If the institution of sacrifice can be regarded as in any way a sign and seal of this covenant, we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews that it was intended to be temporary. It answered a purpose. Not having efficacy itself to take away sin, it kept up a "remembrance of sins" not purged out. But now that Christ has "once in the end of the world appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," now that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," the significance of the sign of sacrifice is done away. No argument, therefore, can be drawn from the existence of a sign *then*, to the propriety of a sign *now*. On the shewing of the apostle (Heb. x.), sacrifices would have ceased to be

offered, if the worshippers had been "once purged," if a satisfactory atonement had been made. They were pledges of a *coming* atonement, *remembrancers of sins* which needed a sacrifice more precious than "of bulls and of goats." They have ceased through "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." They have ceased because this perfect atonement has been made, this blood which "cleanseth from all sin" has been shed, because the worshippers are "justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

But the very same circumstances which have rendered the sign of sacrifice obsolete, render every other sign of a similar texture inappropriate. The sign of sacrifice was a testimony to the fact of an atonement *not yet effected*. The sign was to witness that the thing signified was yet *future*, and loses its meaning when this becomes *present*. A sign of that atonement, now that it has been made, would be out of place. It would be an ignoring of the death of the Son of God. And by parity of reasoning, a sign of the Spirit which has been given, is out of place. It is an ignoring of the Saviour's promise, "I will send you another Comforter," an ignoring of the fact that believers *are* "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13.

The argument from analogy thus fails when brought to bear upon the covenants with Adam, with Noah, and with Abraham. These afford no solid basis for the use of rites in the Christian Church. The ground is accordingly narrowed, and the comparison is restricted to what are more specially denominated the Old and the New Testaments, the two forms of the covenant of grace. The argument, as now to be considered, is,—The dispensation introduced by Moses had signs. The dispensation ushered in by Jesus Christ must have signs as well. To this I reply, that there is a wide distinction to be drawn between the old and the new, a distinction which we are not left to infer from the general character of each, but of which we read in so many words. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the

house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD," Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. When we read that the two covenants are to be unlike, it is surely a rash conclusion to affirm that in respect of ordinances they must be like. The second covenant was to be different in character from the first. It is an allowable supposition that it may be different in this respect as well as in others, at all events till some passage is adduced, shewing that the change does not extend to this particular.

But that it does extend to this, appears from the continuation of the passage—"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Here it is asserted, that the great feature in which the new covenant stands out from the old is, that those who are interested in it are changed in heart. Not a word is said about a ceremonial sanctification; but the new covenant brings with it a real and inward sanctification. Now we know that the old covenant had to do with a ceremonial sanctification. An apostle tells us, that it stood "in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances," that the rites employed in it sanctified "to the purifying of the flesh," Heb. ix. 10, 13. Surely it is no unwarrantable supposition that the distinction lies here, that where the one has the type, the other has the anti-type—that while both have to do with divine commands, the one aims at a ceremonial purity, accomplished by attendance to ceremonial ordinances; the other, at a

spiritual cleansing, brought about by direct contact with the Holy Ghost, the great spiritual agent.

This conclusion is confirmed by the way in which the above passage is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The quotation is prefaced by the words, "If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He saith,"—and then come the words from Jeremiah, as above. It is followed up by—"In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away. Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary," Heb. viii. 7-13; ix. 1. The natural inference from these words is, that one of the features peculiar to that covenant of which the apostle speaks as ready to vanish away, was the possession of ordinances, *δικαιώματα λατρείας*. The "worldly sanctuary," connected here with this, has vanished away. It has not only disappeared in its then form, but nothing like it is found in the new economy, in the Gospel Church. Why, then, should it be maintained that ordinances must be left, that in some shape or other we must have rites of initiation and ceremonial worship? If the language of the apostle implies that ritual worship was peculiar to the first covenant, and if this covenant, when he wrote, was ready to vanish away, surely the ritual worship must have been ready to vanish away as well, and should before now have come to an end.

These reasonings are further confirmed by the descriptions which are given in Scripture of New Testament worship. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," John iv. 23, 24. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," Rom. xii. 1. "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God con-

tinually; that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," Heb. xiii. 15, 16.

In the first of these passages, New Testament worship is described as spiritual communion with God. Where this is, there is worship. Where this is wanting, there is none. No account is made here of ceremonies. Time was when God was acceptably worshipped through these. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

In the other two passages worship is spoken of, not so much in its essence, as in its outward manifestations. The first covenant had ordinances of *service*, *λατρεία*. There is a *λατρεία* in the second covenant, a reasonable *service*, but it consists in presenting the body to God; in other words, in regulating the actions according to His will. This is a sacrifice acceptable to Him. To do good and to communicate are sacrifices with which God is well pleased. Scripture seems to recognise an outward as well as an inward worship. The life of the Christian is not to be all meditation, there is to be action as well. But the action is not of the ceremonial character. Even when terms which in the old economy describe purely ritual matters are employed in the new, care is taken to shew that in the transfer, they have come to indicate that which is moral. The *sacrifices* of the one are replaced by the *active benevolence* of the other; the *service* which consisted in *ordinances*, by the *dedicating of the body, the whole outer life* to the service of God. Such descriptions leave no room for ceremonies. They seem to fill up the believer's life with contemplation and action, earnest communings of spirit and active deeds of Christian love.

Many other passages corroborative of this view might be adduced. I add only one, for the sake of quoting a note on it by Trench. "Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted

from the world," James i. 27. Trench, speaking of the meaning of the word *religion* in this passage, says there is abundant evidence to shew that it meant not godliness, the sum total of our duties to God, but "that, like the Greek *θρησκεία*, for which it here stands, like the Latin *religio*, it meant the outward forms and embodiments in which the inward principle of piety arrayed itself, the external service of God: and St. James is urging upon those to whom he is writing something of this kind: 'Instead of the ceremonial services of the Jews, which consisted in divers washings and in other elements of this world, let our service, our *θρησκεία*, take a nobler shape, let it consist in deeds of pity and of love,'—and it was this which our translators intended when they used 'religion' here, and 'religious' in the verse preceding." He adds that religion was once used predominantly "for the *outward* service of God."—(*English, Past and Present*, pp. 177, 178.) Here, then, we learn from one who is investigating the meaning of words, who has no argument on the point of ceremonies to support, or if he has, it is on the other side, in their favour,—from him we learn that instead of the ritual of one economy answering to the ritual of the other, on scriptural authority, the *moral duties* of the New Testament are the proper counterpart of the ceremonial practices of the Old.

The second statement to be examined is that,

(2.) *Water-baptism is the initiatory rite of Christianity.* The preceding remarks apply to this, for if Scripture recognises nothing ritual in the new economy, it cannot recognise a ritual baptism. But it may be further observed that water-baptism has not the characters which might be looked for in an initiatory rite. It is unlike the rites of the Old Testament. "There is a multitude of rites in the Old Testament, but we believe in every instance that the *person*, the *time*, the *place*, and the *mode*, are rigorously defined. Whatever be the rite in question, it is stipulated who is to perform it, who is to be the subject, at what time, in what place, and with what attendant circumstances, it is to be observed. It cannot be pretended

that this occurs in the case before us. As to the person who is to celebrate it, it is idle to pretend that there is a rule laid down, when we see it performed in one instance by an apostle, in another by a deacon, in others by those who held no office in the Church. It is vain to seek to make out a principle in this instance. As to the time when it is to be practised, the interminable discussions that have now lasted for centuries, between the Pædobaptists and their opponents, serve to shew how little of a rule can have been laid down in this particular. As to the mode, the same argument may be employed, that it, if defined, could not have been determined with any precision. But is that a rite, all the conditions of which are left to the taste and fancy of each man who chooses to observe it? Is it not the very character of an ordinance that it is prescribed in the most punctilious manner? Does it not owe all its value to the circumstance that its outlines are defined with the utmost care? Is it not the very genius of an ordinance, that in its whole length and breadth it is a thing ordained? Do we ever find, during the economy of the Old Testament, that men fell into endless discussions about the time, place, and manner of any one of the rites? Is it to be supposed that the same Spirit who laid off the ordinances in such a manner in the one dispensation as to prevent mistakes, would leave them thus vague and indefinite in the other?"—(*Wishart's Theological Essays*, pp. 264, 265.)

More particularly, it is unlike the *initiatory rite* of the Old Testament. Circumcision is called a *seal*, Rom. iv. 11. Baptism with water never is in Scripture. But the act of sealing is affirmed of the Spirit. "God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," "the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. i. 13; iv. 30. And agreeably with this, the apostle, speaking of the new economy, says, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. "Circumcision

is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii. 29. So then, that which now answers to circumcision is not a rite, but a *character*. The man who is sealed with the Spirit, who worships God in the spirit, who is circumcised in heart, is the man who has been initiated into the Church of Jesus Christ. And instead of an initiatory rite, we have the door guarded with the solemn declaration, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3.

And as the name *seal* is not given in Scripture, so it cannot, with appropriateness, be given to baptism with water. Circumcision was a seal, inasmuch as it marked out and distinguished those to whom it was administered from those who had it not. Regeneration is a seal, for it gives a new character to the man who is regenerated. But water-baptism is no seal, for it leaves no mark behind by which its subjects can be detected. In the ritual meaning of the expression, no one will venture to affirm that he can tell a baptized from an unbaptized man, by anything either in his appearance or in his habits. The rite does not mark off a class. It does not leave behind any indication of its having been administered. Sprinkling does not. Immersion does not. To call either of these a seal is, therefore, simply a misnomer.

Or even dropping the use of the word seal, to call it an *initiatory rite* is incorrect. If it be an initiatory rite, into what does it initiate? Plainly not into the kingdom of grace. For the theory of one party is, that no man ought to have the rite administered until he has given evidence of having been already regenerated; while the practice of another party is, to administer the ordinance at an age when the subject is unconscious of it, and in a vast number of instances to those who prove in after life never to have been regenerated at all. In neither case can it be said to be that which *introduces into the kingdom of grace*. It will perhaps be said that it initiates into the visible Church. But unfortunately for this position, it



leaves, as we have seen, no mark upon the person. Those who belong to the visible Church should be visibly different from others. But if they are so, it is not in respect of their baptism. Many who have had the ordinance administered in infancy, could not establish the fact at the mouth of two or three witnesses, could not give any satisfactory evidence of it, and of course their own consciousness does not go back to the date of its administration. Some who have never had it administered, may be living in the belief that they have, and be regarded by others as within the pale of the visible Church. If this be the test, there is a vast number of persons who cannot be sure whether they belong to the visible Church or not.

Even adult baptism, and that by immersion, does not mark off those to whom it has been administered from all others. Doubtless, in ordinary cases, a man cannot fail to be conscious of the fact of his undergoing an immersion; but after it is over, there is nothing to testify the fact to others. He might be so circumstanced as that he could not certify the fact to the satisfaction of others, so as to obtain admission to another church or congregation; while a designing knave might, by pilfering or forging a certificate, obtain an entrance to the ranks of the straitest sect. At all events, those who practise immersion do not regard it as a mark of the visible Church; for in the confession of a numerous body of their ministers, we read, "All persons throughout the world, professing the faith of the Gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ, according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors, everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are and may be called, visible saints."—(*Baptist Confession*, chap. 26, sec. 2.) So that, unless the neglect of immersion be an everting of the foundation, it is not here regarded as a distinctive mark by which the visible saint is known.

The truth seems to be, that the common idea of a *visible Church* consists only with a state in which all believers are supposed to be included in one outward organization, and is utterly meaningless as applied to the state of matters in the present day. The Church is visible just in so

far as it consists of those who have a visibly Christian character. Disciples are a peculiar people; and in so far as their peculiarities come out in their dealings with men, in so far as they are seen to be influenced by higher motives, and swayed by nobler principles than others, living epistles, "known and read of all men, *manifestly declared* to be the epistle of Christ," 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3, in so far they may be said to constitute a visible Church. But it is obvious that that which makes them visible, that which shews them to belong to the body, is nothing ritual, but is the possession of the faith and character of God's elect. In these things they are one; for as there is one body, so there is one Spirit, Eph. iv. 4; and by this Spirit they are all baptized into the one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. As to anything ritual in the Church, men never have agreed, and never will agree, until they resolve to have done with rites altogether, as inconsistent with the spiritual character of the New Testament economy.

2. Water-baptism, employed as a religious rite, is termed baptism simply; spiritual baptism is not. Therefore, when the Saviour tells His disciples to baptize, without specifying one or other, the former, and not the latter, must be intended.—In regard to this, I remark, that all the passages already adduced relate to a period in which water-baptism was in use, and spiritual baptism was not; and, therefore, it was natural for the sacred writers to give the simple name to the former, as that which was an actually existing fact. They speak of baptism as administered in the days of John. One of themselves tells us that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given," John vii. 39; and, therefore, their words are liable to no ambiguity, and can point only to water-baptism. But their own narratives tell us of a new dispensation, called the kingdom of heaven, a dispensation in which John has no place at all. They tell us, further, of a new baptism, associated particularly with the name of Jesus, the head of this new dispensation, the ruler of this kingdom; and they seem, further, to intimate that there was a significancy in water-baptism, as administered by John, which could not be attached to it a few years later.

Now, keeping these things in mind, is it, I ask, a necessary inference, that when Jesus, now that John has passed away, and just before He ascends himself to the Father, gives a commission to His disciples to baptize, this commission must be interpreted as pointing to a baptism identical with that exercised by John? Though at one period the evangelists use the name as equivalent to water-baptism, do not their words teach that a time might come when something different would be indicated by it?

How should we reason upon other subjects? Suppose a historical writer, after mentioning the name of king in some ancient period of history, were to add—The kings of these days did not possess the splendid retinue or the extended dominions belonging to those of a later period, but resembled rather, in power and authority, what we would call the chief of a clan: suppose that this writer, bringing down his history to more modern times, were to speak of king Henry VIII., or king William IV., should we, from the use of the word king, infer that he looked upon these monarchs as on a level with a Highland chieftain? would not the previous explanation rather foster the belief, that we might have reached the times when the name had acquired a more extended signification? And so, does not the language of the evangelists in the passages already considered, instead of implying that baptism would always mean baptism with water, leave room for the supposition that a time might come when that would be no longer the baptism of the age, but something higher and nobler should have come in its place? Whether or no the passage before us refers to such a period, is of course another matter, to be determined by other considerations. Meantime, what has been advanced, may serve to shew that we are not shut up to the position that, since the word baptize is used without an adjunct, an ordinance such as that administered by John must be intended.

3. The disciples of Jesus administered water-baptism during our Saviour's own ministry, but the baptism of the

Spirit is never attributed to any but Jesus himself; therefore, when they are commanded to baptize, the former must be intended, and not the latter.—To this argument, some of the above remarks will apply. The Gospels contain a narrative of the Saviour's ministry; and it was not in the nature of things that they should contain a record of spiritual baptisms, for this reason, that the Spirit was not given. The disciples baptized with water. That was the baptism of the period. That they did not baptize with the Spirit, does not prove that they were never to do so; for, up to this period, Jesus himself had not administered this spiritual baptism. In fact, He told His disciples that if He did not go to the Father, the Spirit would not come to them, John xvi. 7. But it may be pleaded—John said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," Matt. iii. 11. Do not such words, it may be said, imply that spiritual baptism was the especial work of Jesus, and not to be shared in by others? No more, I reply, than the first clause of the passage implies that water-baptism was, in such a sense, the especial work of John, as that it could not be shared in by others. John ascribes to Jesus a much higher office than that which belongs to himself. But it is to be recollected that Jesus has himself expressly declared, that every disciple of the new economy was to be greater than John. Because John was not advanced above the office of baptizing with water, it does not follow that disciples should not be, in the economy of the Spirit, for they were to be greater than John.

And let it not be thought that I am seeking, in these remarks, to lower men's estimate of the person of Jesus. Far be it from me to say one word that would derogate from the honour of Jesus, or in any way take from that glory which is peculiarly His. I have no wish to bring Him down to a level with His followers, or to put on the same footing the Lord and His servants. I know that in all things He has the pre-eminence, and that without Him

His people can do nothing. But whether, I ask, would His glory most conspicuously appear in making an immediate gift of the Spirit to each follower, or in causing that one disciple should be the channel through which His influence should flow to another, in giving to each such a measure of His influences as would serve his own needs, or in imparting the Spirit so copiously as that they who had freely received might freely give?

4. The baptism of the Spirit was confined to the first ages of the Church, and ceased a few years after Pentecost. A command for the Church in all time cannot, therefore, point to this. This argument, in its narrowest form, is thus put in a recent popular work on religious denominations, in the article headed "The Baptists," and under the name of F. A. Cox:—"There is *now*, in the scriptural sense of the words, *no baptism of the Spirit*. No miraculous gift, no converting operation, no sanctifying influence of the Spirit, is ever, by the inspired writers, called the baptism of the Holy Ghost, except what took place on the day of Pentecost, and at the first calling of the Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius. . . . We have no warrant to expect the scriptural baptism of the Spirit in the present day. We may, indeed, experience the converting and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, but these influences are not the scriptural baptism of the Spirit, nor ought we to call them the baptism of the Spirit."—(*Cyclopædia of Religious Denominations*, page 235.)

Does this argument call for a serious answer? I can scarcely think so. Each of the four evangelists records the words of John, "He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost." Three of them give them as spoken to the multitudes who came to his baptism, to "the people," to "the Pharisees and Sadducees," "He shall baptize *you* with the Holy Ghost." All of them speak of this as that by which Jesus was to be distinguished from His forerunner. And is it come to this, that while "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," came to John to be baptized of him, two occasions can exhaust

the full meaning of the words, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost," and that John's prediction points to nothing further than what took place in one house in Jerusalem, and one house in Cesarea? It cannot be. Rather *these* were earnest of coming blessings upon a much larger scale. Then the first-fruits were reaped of Jew and of Gentile, the early clusters of grapes, giving token of an abundant harvest, a rich vintage yet to be gathered. In close connection with the promise to the disciples, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," stand the words, "Ye shall receive power, . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts i. 5, 8. In close proximity with the command, "Go, baptize," is the assurance, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. It is argued from the latter passage, that the command is binding not upon the apostles alone, but upon disciples "alway, even unto the end of the world." It is surely no far-fetched inference from the other, that the promise of the Holy Ghost is not to those only who testify "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria," but to their successors as well, bearing the same testimony "unto the uttermost part of the earth." When disciples are constituted Christ's witnesses, it is after a promise, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," the Holy Ghost shall "come upon you." Those who have succeeded them in the character of witnesses should succeed them also in the character of expectants. If we are God's witnesses, we must have God's Spirit, for "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. ii. 11. If we are to bear this testimony before men, we must "be endued with power from on high;" we must, as well as Peter and John, be baptized with the Holy Ghost. The proper baptism of the Spirit cannot have ceased, but must be continued.

But I need not dwell longer upon this point, as there are probably as many to admit as to deny the continuance of spiritual baptism after the time of the apostles. The

“converting operation,” the “sanctifying influence of the Spirit,” exerted upon each disciple, is held by many to be true spiritual baptism. Thus M'Crie—“There is, as we have had frequent occasion to observe, an inner as well as an outer baptism—a baptism with the Spirit as well as a baptism with water. This spiritual baptism, symbolized by the outward rite, is begun in the day of regeneration. The child of God does not receive the proper signification of baptism till he is born again. . . . He is not baptized, in the properest and highest sense of that term, till he has undergone ‘the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.’”—(*Lectures on Baptism*, pp. 129, 130.)

But many who allow this, will not grant that a command to baptize can refer to spiritual baptism; because they look upon man as entirely passive in the matter. They regard spiritual baptism as a something which he may receive, but which he can never, in any circumstances, be supposed to impart. And this brings us, accordingly, to the next argument to be considered; namely, that,

5. It is impossible for disciples to baptize with the Spirit, but they are competent to baptize with water; therefore the latter, and not the former baptism, must be intended in the command. If by an impossibility is meant that which cannot be performed without divine aid, the statement is true; but it applies equally to other things as to this. Without Christ we can do nothing. Without the power of God we cannot stretch an arm or lift a finger. The performance of the simplest action implies the continuance of those laws which we see in existence, and the aid of a higher than man. If only those commands which could be executed independently of divine assistance, were to be considered binding, we should be able to free ourselves from obligation to any. And in this view of the matter, no baptism would come within the range of the possible, and therefore we might argue that none was intended. For the administration of water-baptism, the divine aid is necessary. It is requisite that the administrator should have a certain amount of

physical strength, and this comes from above. An objector might say—It is not in my power. Who knows but that my arm may be palsied before the opportunity is reached, or at the very moment that the act is attempted? And, therefore, the objection in this shape will apply to water-baptism equally with spiritual.

But it will be said that I have mis-stated the impossibility, that what is intended is something beyond the *natural powers* of man, and for the performance of which he is not naturally competent. If the objection take this form, then I allow that water-baptism comes within the range of that which is possible to the natural powers of man, and spiritual baptism does not. But I deny the inference that therefore the former only, and not the latter, can be the subject of a command. When Jesus sent out the twelve on an earlier mission, and said to them, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give," Matt. x. 7, 8, He surely enjoined them to do some things beyond their natural powers. The power is not given to every one to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead, to cast out devils. These are things out of the range of those actions ordinarily performed by men, and the disciples might have answered their Lord on this view—You prescribe impossibilities, you command us to do that which does not fall within the compass of our power as men. But they undertook the mission, and went, as the evangelist informs us, "preaching the Gospel, and *healing* everywhere," Luke ix 6. And when the seventy returned from a like mission, they testified, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name," Luke x. 17. Here, then, we have commands given, undertaken, and executed, which involve the doing of things beyond the natural powers of man, and for which, as ordinarily constituted, he is totally and hopelessly incompetent. Hence, I conclude, that actions which are naturally impossible, or beyond the powers of man, may be the subject of a command by Jesus.



To say that spiritual baptism is a thing naturally impossible for man to administer, is not to say that he can never be enjoined to administer it. The disciples were enjoined to work miracles beyond their natural strength. To shew that they could not be enjoined to baptize with the Spirit, some other reason must be adduced than this. Supernatural aid has been imparted in other instances. Is it impossible to conceive of it in this? Some will probably say that it is impossible, that it belongs to the nature of Jesus himself to administer spiritual baptism, that it is one of those incommunicable properties which cannot be shared, part of that glory which He will by no means give to another. Of course, if this assertion could be made good, there would be an end of the question. But if, on the other hand, it can be shewn that the power in question was actually exerted, this will amount to a proof that it was not one of those incommunicable properties which Jesus could not impart to others.

The book of Acts informs us that the apostles Peter and John "laid their hands on them [dwellers in Samaria], and they received the Holy Ghost," viii. 17; that Ananias was sent to Saul, that he might receive his sight, and "be filled with the Holy Ghost," ix. 17; and that "when Paul had laid his hands upon them [certain disciples at Ephesus], the Holy Ghost came on them," xix. 6. Here are instances in which the laying on of the apostles' hands was followed by the descent of the Spirit; and one instance in which a disciple was sent for the express purpose that the Holy Ghost might be imparted to another. It will perhaps be said, that in these cases we have two separate statements, one of which records what was done by man, the other what was done by God; that the laying on of the hands and the imparting of the Spirit are separate things, the one being performed by men, the other by God. The objection, if it proves anything, proves too much; for how, I ask, is undoubted miraculous agency on the part of Jesus himself expressed? Is it not in such language as this:—"He *touch*ed her hand, and the fever left her," Matt. viii. 15. "When He had spit on his eyes, and *put His*

*hands upon him*, He asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that, He *put His hands again upon his eyes*, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly," Mark viii. 23-25. "*And He laid His hands on her*, and immediately she was made straight," Luke xiii. 13. Will it be said that in such cases as these there was a less real forthputting of power on the part of Jesus, than when it is directly stated, "He healed"? In these cases there are two statements, one to the effect that the hands were laid on, another to the effect that a cure followed. Does not every sober reader of the Bible attribute the healing to the person who laid on his hands?

But the unwillingness, in many minds, to admit the agency of disciples in communicating the influences of the Spirit lies, I have no doubt, in a misconception of what is intended by the doctrine. When it is argued that disciples imparted the Spirit, or baptized with the Spirit, it is not meant to assert that they were the first cause in this work, any more than that Peter and John were in the healing of the lame man at the temple, or that they could have done it without the power of God working in their own souls. What is maintained is, that as the disciples, all the time that they knew the performance of miraculous works to be beyond their natural powers, still set themselves to the work of healing, believing that their Master, who had given the command, would supply the power at the proper time; so, the disciples, all the time that they felt themselves to be nothing without Christ, yet, believing His promise of spiritual aid, set themselves knowingly to the work of imparting unto others that gift which they had themselves received: that the laying on of the apostles' hands (whatever the expression implies) and the coming down of the Spirit, were not things brought together by some hap-hazard, which the apostles never contemplated, but that they acted on the belief—the well-grounded belief—that with them it rested, in a measure, whether or no the Spirit was given to others, and that for the effecting of this object they laid their hands on them.

This much, I think, follows from such passages as these: "*Through laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given,*" Acts viii. 18; "*The Lord hath sent me, that thou mightest be filled with the Holy Ghost,*" ix. 17. It was of design, in each of these cases, that the hands were laid on, or the disciple brought into contact with another. The parties concerned recognised this as the medium, and themselves as the agents, by which the Spirit was to be given.

There is one other form which the objection may take. The cases I have referred to, it may be said, are instances in which spiritual *gifts* were imparted, but not spiritual grace, instances of the power of working miracles being bestowed, but not of a saving change being effected. To this form of the objection I have two answers. (1.) First of all, the assumption is gratuitous. We are merely told—"They received the Holy Ghost," "The Holy Ghost came on them," I am sent "that thou mightest be filled with the Holy Ghost." In what way the Spirit operated we are not informed. But it is a mere gratuitous assumption to say that it is in the way of gifts only, and not of grace. But I have this further answer, that, (2.) Whether on this occasion or not, still on some occasions disciples exercised that very power which is here denied them, and were the vehicles through which the grace of God was transmitted. In proof of this, I have merely to refer to some of the other names by which a spiritual work is described in Scripture.

The word of God is called "seed," Luke viii. 11, and by this incorruptible seed sinners are "born again," 1 Pet. i. 23. No reader of his Bible will deny that this must be effected by the Spirit of God. Again, when God, by the prophet, says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, I will put my Spirit within you," Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, it will not be denied that here, too, the influence of the Spirit is intended. And yet Paul says, "*I have planted, Apollos watered,*" 1 Cor. iii. 6; that is to say, We have both been instruments of imparting the Spirit. It is true he adds, "God gave the increase." But his words are

equivalent to saying—We have done our part, in the faith of that increase being reaped, just as the husbandman throws in the seed, or waters it, in the expectation of reaping a return. We have done our part knowingly, and of design, and that part was the imparting of spiritual influences.

The Church of Christ is compared to a building, apostles and prophets being the foundation, and Jesus Christ himself the chief corner-stone, Eph. ii. 20. In Christ believers “are builded together through the Spirit,” ver. 22. It will be allowed that it is the Spirit’s work to lay the foundation, and to erect the superstructure, to prepare the stones for their places, and to fit them into the spiritual temple. And yet Paul says, “I have laid the foundation,” if not of the whole Church, yet of that portion of it in Corinth, “and another buildeth thereon,” 1 Cor. iii. 10. “We are labourers *together with God*,” ver. 9.

*Conversion*, or the turning of a sinner from sin unto God, is generally regarded as the peculiar work of the Spirit. And yet the apostle James says, “He which *converteth* the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins,” v. 20.

But if there is one word which more than another serves to indicate the Spirit’s work on the human soul, that word is *regeneration*. John speaks of those who have received Christ as being “*born* not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of *God*,” John i. 13. Jesus tells us that His disciples must be “born from above,” John iii. 3 (margin); “born of the Spirit,” ver. 5. Peter writes to those of whom, with himself, he can say, “*God hath begotten us again* unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” 1 Pet. i. 3. And yet Paul writes to the Corinthians, “In Christ Jesus *I have begotten you* through the Gospel,” 1 Cor. iv. 15. To Philemon he says, “I beseech thee for *my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten* in my bonds,” ver. 10. He addresses Timothy as his “*own son* in the faith,” his “dearly beloved son,” and uses similar language to Titus. If such expressions do not intimate that Paul looked upon

himself as the instrument of a saving change in the cases referred to, I know not what words could convey this meaning.

From what has been advanced, I think it is evident that a spiritual work, a work of conversion, a saving operation is ascribed, by the sacred writers, to man. I repeat what I have already said, that of course it is to be remembered that the first cause in this work is not man, but God. Still, if the word of God be true, men have, in some instances at least, been consciously agents, not only in working out their own salvation, but in effecting the salvation of others; and have wrought none the less efficaciously, but all the more, because it is God that worketh in them, Phil. ii. 12. I conclude then that spiritual baptism has not always been impossible for man to accomplish, that it is not absurd to suppose men enjoined to perform it, because they have actually been agents in this very matter. Whether or no it be in obedience to this command, "Go ye, and teach, baptizing," this much is certain, that disciples have baptized with the Spirit, and therefore the passage is left to be examined on its own merits. I have not proved that spiritual baptism is here intended, but I think I have demonstrated that there is nothing antecedently impossible in the supposition that it may be. Neither the inferences deduced from the passages already considered, nor the necessities of the case, drive us to water-baptism as the only possible meaning in this place. The context must therefore be examined, and the bearing of other passages of Scripture upon this. The arguments for water-baptism hitherto examined are not decisive, but leave it still an open question between that and spiritual. My reasons for believing the latter to be here intended, I shall state as follows.

#### ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF A SPIRITUAL RENDERING OF THE COMMISSION.

1. The time to which the command refers is emphatically the new era, the dispensation of the Spirit. All the

baptisms previously noticed were in the era of the law and the prophets, for, as we have seen, the Spirit was not yet given. But intimation had been made that the Gospel dispensation, the age of the Spirit, was soon to begin. And while the disciples were commanded to preach in all the world the Gospel of the kingdom, they were commanded not to depart from Jerusalem, not to set out upon their mission, until they had received the promise of the Father, until they had been endowed with power from on high. They were told, "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," and this was to take place before they set out on their mission. Now, when we have this express intimation that the era of shadows would come to a close, and that the age of the Spirit would commence, before the command of Jesus was in a single instance complied with, nay, when disciples are expressly enjoined to wait till this period before setting out to preach the Gospel, there is a strong presumption that the baptism intended is that of the age about to be introduced, the baptism of the Spirit. When Jesus says, "John baptized with water, but ye *shall be*-baptized with the Holy Ghost," His words seem to signify—The baptism of John is a thing past and over. The baptism with which you shall henceforth have to do is of a very different nature. And when He says, "Go ye, teach all nations, baptizing them," instead of viewing Him as pointing to that which had passed away, it seems more natural to regard Him as referring to that which was soon to be, and which, if not on the same occasion, then at most a few days sooner or later, He had been speaking to them of, and contrasting with the past.

2. This baptism is described as "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is generally argued—The kind of baptism here is not specified. Only the general expression *baptize* is employed, and that has hitherto been used with reference to water-baptism. Therefore that must be the thing meant in this place. But there is something like a specification here, for it is *into the name of the Trinity*. Many content themselves with

viewing these words as in the translation, equivalent to *in* the name, or by the authority of Father, Son, and Spirit. But literally rendered they will not bear this construction. The exact translation is *into* the name. This has been noticed by many who retain water-baptism, and who satisfy themselves by substituting the word *into* for *in*, in the formula they use. It is to be remembered, however, that the command does not run, Baptize, using these words, I baptize in, or into; but that the command is, *Baptize into the name*. The question is not, What words are we to employ on the occasion? but, What are we to do? The answer is, to baptize into the name of the Trinity. And the point now to be investigated is, What is meant by this?

The name is often put for the person, or the whole character, being that by which one is known and distinguished. Thus the servants of David said to him, "God make the name of Solomon better than thy name," 1 Kings i. 47, that is, "God give to him even a higher character, and make his person greater and more honoured than thine." In Job xxx. 8, what is in the margin translated "men of no name," is given in the text as "base men," equivalent to men of no character, worthless men. The name of God is put for Himself or His character in such instances as these—"The *name* of the God of Jacob defend thee," Ps. xx. 1; "The *name* of the Lord is a strong tower," Prov. xviii. 10. And so more particularly of Jesus Christ. "*His name* shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," Isa. ix. 6—these are the characters which belong to Him. This serves to explain the expression, "them that believe on *His name*," John i. 12, which is equivalent to—them that believe on Himself as revealed, them that believe on Him in those characters in which He is represented in Scripture. Hence too the significancy of the command, "Thou shalt not take *the name* of the Lord thy God in vain," a command which forbids not merely the utterance of oaths, but anything in thought, word, or deed, that would reflect on the honour

or glory of God. And hence too, the appropriateness of the comprehensive petition, "Hallowed be *Thy name*," that is, May Thy person and character receive that measure of reverence and honour which belongs to the infinitely Holy Jehovah!

If this be the force of the word *name* as used in Scripture, then to baptize into the name of any one is to baptize into the likeness or character of that person. When the apostle writes, "Were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" "Lest any should say that I had baptized into mine own name," 1 Cor. i. 13, 15, his meaning seems to be not so much, Were ye baptized by the authority of Paul? as rather, Were ye baptized into the party of Paul, so as to form members of a section espousing his views, and identifying themselves with his interests? It is this which the apostle seems so highly to deprecate; not that his authority should be substituted for Christ's in administering a rite, but that *union with himself*, in place of union with his Master, should be the end aimed at in any instance. And to apply this to the passage before us, To baptize into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be *to unite to God*, to administer such a baptism as will introduce into the character of God, and produce a likeness or conformity to that. And this is exactly what the baptism of the Spirit does. They who are the subjects of it "have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, *after the image of Him that created him*," Col. iii. 10. They who have received the Spirit of God, are baptized into the name or character of the Father, for "the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them," Rom. v. 5;—into the name of the Son, for they have been predestinated "to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the first-born of many brethren," Rom. viii. 29, and that therefore they might be like Him; and it is by one Spirit that they are all baptized into the one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13;—and into the name of the Spirit, for "that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," John iii. 6; it has a resemblance to the author of its birth.



Spiritual baptism then is, in the truest sense of the words, a baptism "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But this cannot be said of water-baptism. If commanded by God, it might be administered *in* the name of God, but in no one form or other now in use can it be said to introduce the subject *into* the character of God. It is the melancholy confession of all the Churches which use it, that of those baptized by them, many, by their works, shew themselves to be more the children of the wicked one than the children of God. But "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14. I conclude then, that to baptize into the name of God, is to baptize with His Spirit.

3. A promise of supernatural aid *was* given to the disciples. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," Acts i. 8. In the margin it is, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost, coming upon you." It matters little for the argument which rendering be adopted. Either shews that the descent of the Spirit upon the disciples was to be accompanied by an accession of power, such as they had not hitherto possessed, and which should, in a manner, qualify them for being Christ's witnesses. They had asked Jesus whether He would at this time restore the kingdom to Israel. The answer is, that it is not for them to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power, but that they shall receive power. Jesus turns them aside from the immediate subject of their question, and says to them in effect—Let this be enough for you. To whatever office you may be called, you shall receive power to discharge its duties. Ye are my witnesses, and for this the Holy Ghost will fit you. Now, what power did the disciples receive on the descent of the Holy Ghost? Some one will answer, The power of working miracles. But this they enjoyed before, when they were sent out on a temporary mission by Jesus. This verse seems rather to point to something new. Was there no unwonted power accompanying their words, when the effect of their preach-

ing was that they who heard were pricked in their heart, and the same day so many as about three thousand souls were added unto them? Were the apostles not instrumental in bringing about the conversion of those very persons who had remained unmoved during the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ himself? The power which accompanied their words was unquestionably the power of the Spirit, and this seems to be the very thing promised in the verse quoted above.

I do not lose sight of the fact that this verse is to be found not in Matthew's Gospel, with the command to baptize, but in the book of Acts. There is some little difficulty in determining the chronology of the last words and actions of the Saviour on earth; and many harmonists place the above passage *after* the command, so that an objector might say, The power which is here promised could be no enforcement of the command when given, and cannot lead to the interpretation of it when recorded. But I am not sure that, even in an expository point of view, it is altogether without value on this account. A promise does not lose its reality because not given at the very moment at which we may think it most called for; and if any doubt remained in the minds of the disciples as to the nature of their mission, it might be of design that the Saviour, on a later occasion, reminded them of their new position, and taught them to look for corresponding powers.

But the giving of the command was not without its immediate promise. On whatever occasion the expression just referred to may have been uttered, on this occasion Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . . I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He assured the disciples that His own power was unlimited, and He promised that what of it was needed for the discharge of their commission would not be wanting, and therefore encouraged them to go forth on this mission in the firm confidence that He would himself go with them. But this leads me to remark that,

4. The command is urged on the ground of that power which was given to Christ. "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is *given unto me* in heaven and in earth; *go ye therefore.*" These are remarkable words. It is as if the Saviour, overlooking the vast distance which separated Himself from His disciples by nature, and keeping in view only the great truth that real discipleship implied union with Himself, would impress upon them that what was His was theirs, and not only that, but that the works which He did, they would also be enabled to perform. How *His* being possessed of power should be a reason for *their* working, I do not see except on this principle, that they were one with Him. And this was so certain and firmly established a truth that Jesus does not stop to state it, but takes it for granted throughout. He dwells rather upon the fact that He had triumphed over His enemies, and was about to ascend to His Father, and receive from Him the kingdom. The powers of earth and hell had been combined against Him. They had plotted against the Lord and His anointed. But in vain. *He* was to receive *the heathen* for His inheritance, and the *uttermost parts of the earth* for a possession. And THEREFORE *His disciples* are to go into *all the world*, and to make disciples of *all nations*. All power in heaven and earth was His, and His disciples are *therefore* urged to set out upon their mission. Their Master's cause was theirs, and since He was greater than all, they might undertake the greatest duty which He had imposed upon them. Now, I ask, is it a fitting sequel to this preface to say, Make disciples of all nations, and administer to them the ordinance of water-baptism? Is it not more in keeping with the beginning of the passage for Jesus to continue, Make disciples, and baptize them with the Spirit? All power is given to me, I am to receive the Spirit, and to send it upon you. Go ye therefore, and exert this power. What is mine is yours.

These words of Jesus do away with the objection that spiritual baptism belonged to Himself alone, and could not be shared in by His disciples. For here He makes no

distinction. He views them as His representatives, and speaks as though what He has received power to perform they are to accomplish, and He is to work through them. He has received power, therefore they are to exert power. Surely what is wielded by them must flow from Him. It must be an emanation from Him, and partake of the nature of that which He has himself received. What Jesus tells them to do is what He might have done himself, but what He chose to do through their instrumentality. Now, water-baptism He never administered in person. The baptism of the Spirit was to be expressly His work. If it is His own work, His peculiar work, which He enjoins the disciples to accomplish, who can doubt that it is to baptize with the Spirit, and not with water?

5. To wield the power of the Spirit, is to occupy a higher position than that enjoyed by John. To baptize with water is not. It will be recollected that Jesus had said, with reference to John, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he," and that the meaning I was led to put upon His words was this, that every disciple of the new economy was to be entrusted with a mission more noble than John's (see page 23, &c.). That mission I believe to be to baptize with the Spirit. Take away this, and what is there left in which He excels this greatest of prophets? Water-baptism, under the new dispensation, is sometimes represented as different from, and more exalted than the water-baptism of John, inasmuch as it is a baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. But where, after all, is the great difference between a rite which points forward, and one which points backward; between a Jew baptizing in the name of one that was to come, and a disciple baptizing in the name of the same person when He has already appeared, if the rite be the same, with the exception of the formula, and the fact that in one case it prefigures, and in the other postfigures? Is water-baptism in the nineteenth century more elevated in character than it was in the first? Has the administrator really acquired a loftier position than that occupied by him who was set apart to

this work from the womb, and who had the honour of baptizing Messiah?

Besides, it is to be remembered that even in those Churches which retain water-baptism, its administration is not by any means committed to the hands of every disciple. Generally speaking, it is only one class of office-bearers, and that a very small portion of the whole Church, which administers the ordinance, so that even if it were of a higher character than John's, it cannot be that in which *each* disciple, even *the least*, excels him. What, then, is there left? Allow him the baptism of the Spirit, and immediately he is lifted far above the position of John. John baptizes with water, he baptizes with the Holy Ghost. John was concerned with the shadow, he has to do with the substance. John ministered the sign, he ministers the reality. John baptized the Messiah, who in this as in other respects was made *under the law*; he, as one with Messiah, baptizes others, and this baptism sets them *free from the dominion of the law*.

6. To baptize with the Spirit is to do greater works than were done by Jesus himself during His own ministry, to baptize with water is not. Jesus had told His disciples, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father," John xiv. 12. What the works of Jesus were it is not necessary here to particularize. It is enough to remind the reader that among them were cures of all manner of sickness and diseases, that by Him the blind were made to see, the lame to walk, and the deaf to hear, that the lepers were cleansed, and the dead raised. And where, I ask, are the greater works to be accomplished by disciples? Some have supposed that an instance of these is to be found in the case of Paul, of whom we read, "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them," Acts xix. 11, 12. But Jesus wrought miracles not only by a touch, but without any apparent connection at all between Himself

and the subject of the miracle. He healed at a distance, and that without handkerchiefs or aprons being brought from His body. Surely here the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. But yet believers were to do greater works than Jesus had done. How? I answer, by baptizing with the Spirit, which He had not done when He spake these words. If not thus, it will be difficult to say how. But that this is the true interpretation, further appears from the words with which the Saviour follows up the declaration referred to—"Because I go unto my Father." Jesus, in His addresses to the disciples, associated the gift of the Spirit with the fact of His return to the Father, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but *if I depart, I will send him unto you*," John xvi. 7. "When the Comforter is come *whom I will send unto you from the Father*, even the Spirit of truth," John xv. 26. And now He associates His return to the Father with the doing of greater works on the part of the disciples. Because He went to the Father, they were to do greater works than He had done. But when He went to the Father, He was to send the Spirit upon them. Can it be doubted that it was through that Spirit that these works were to be effected? And if the only way in which they could go beyond what had been already done by Jesus, was in imparting that Spirit to others, shall we say that from this work they were restricted, or not rather that this was the very work to which they were appointed?

This view of the subject, I again remark, does not tend to lower the person of Jesus. Rightly considered, it tends rather to exalt and honour Him in the conception of His followers. To say that disciples baptized with His Spirit is not to take from Him His glory, it is to view Him as more glorious than before. It is to say that His work did not terminate with His death, and that He did not then abandon the mighty enterprise for which He had clothed Himself in humanity, and passed through the hottest fires. It is to say, that having ascended to His Father, His delights were still with the children of men.

It is to say, too, that He could work at a distance as well as near at hand, by human instrumentality as well as in His own person. It is to exhibit Him in the most beautiful and condescending light, to say that, while in the work of suffering He would be alone, and bear in His own person the full brunt of the battle, so soon as He had ascended on high, and received gifts for men, He was ready to share these with those who had proved deserters in the hour of trial, and to let disciples assist in the honourable work of laying the foundations of the spiritual edifice. It is to magnify the grace of God, and shew that from the most unpromising materials He can raise up the most honoured instruments for advancing His ends. But it is not to sink the high character of Messiah. Because He lives, they live also, and their mission is executed in virtue of His promise, "*Lo, I am with you alway.*" So soon as they forget this, their voice is powerless. While they lean all their weight upon Jesus, their words are followed by demonstration of the Spirit and by power.

## II.

"He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."—MARK XVI. 16.

The argument from this passage, in favour of water-baptism, may be shortly stated as follows. The baptism here is represented as something distinct from faith, "*He that believeth, and is baptized.*" But faith is the gift of God, wrought in the soul by His Spirit. Therefore, the baptism must be something separate from the Spirit's work, it must be water-baptism.—This argument appears, at first sight, conclusive. Let us see whether it will stand examination. I shall not here question the truth of the statements on which it is founded. I shall admit that before a man can heartily believe the glad tidings of salvation, the Spirit of God must have operated on his soul. I shall go further, and admit that faith is sometimes put for the whole work of conversion, as when it is said, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be*

saved," Acts xvi. 31. But this is upon the principle of a part being put for the whole. Knowledge is put for as much when it is said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3. But it will not, therefore, be said that faith and knowledge are interchangeable terms, or that the words of an apostle are meaningless when he says, "*Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,*" 2 Pet. i. 5. The graces of the Christian character are so closely linked together, that one may be put for the whole. But knowledge which does not lead to practice is worthless, it is not saving knowledge. And faith which is not evidenced by works is also worthless, it is not saving faith. There are some who know their Master's will but yet do it not. We cannot say that eternal life is theirs. There are some who believe, but obey not the Gospel of God's Son. We cannot say that such have believed to the saving of the soul. To believe, is often used in Scripture in such a sense as not to include the sanctification of the soul.

There are instances of persons who, in the language of the Bible, have believed, but yet have not been baptized by the Spirit. One or two examples will make this plain. When Philip went down to Samaria, preaching the Word, the people believed the things which he spake. But the faith which they possessed did not render a subsequent work of the Spirit superfluous or impossible. The historian tells us that "as yet the Holy Ghost was fallen upon none of them," but that when the apostles "laid their hands on them they received the Holy Ghost," Acts viii. 16, 17. In this instance, to believe and to receive the Holy Ghost were not the same thing. The Samaritans had believed before they were baptized with the Spirit. Whatever influence the Spirit may have exerted upon their souls when they believed the things spoken by Philip, He had not then fallen on them, they had not been baptized with the Holy Ghost.

In the nineteenth chapter of Acts, we read of certain disciples at Ephesus, of whom Paul inquired, "Have ye



received the Holy Ghost *since ye believed?*" In his conception, then, faith and the reception of the Holy Ghost were not identical. There is a receiving of the Holy Ghost which *follows* the act of believing. The answer of the disciples is, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." And yet these men had believed. It was *after this* that Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Ghost came on them. Evidently, in the view of the historian, to believe and to receive the Spirit might be separated by a wide interval.

Again, Paul, in the course of an epistle having introduced the name of Christ, says to the Ephesians (i. 13), "In whom also, *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Here is a sealing by the Spirit *after* the individuals addressed had believed, and, more than this, after they had believed in Christ.

From the foregoing I conclude, that to believe, in the sense in which the expression is often employed in the word of God, is not to receive the gift of the Spirit, but that scriptural phraseology supposes it possible for persons to be baptized with the Spirit after they have believed. When, therefore, Jesus says, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved," if we understand the baptism to be that of the Spirit, His words will not be without meaning, nay, they will acquire a truthfulness which they want on the other supposition. He that believeth, and is baptized with water, is not necessarily a saved man, may never be saved. Simon Magus himself believed and was baptized in this sense, Acts viii. 13; and yet Peter could address him in such language as this, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," verses 21, 23. But he that believeth, and is baptized with the Spirit, *shall be saved*; for, says the apostle, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. iii. 5. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63.

And these are not mere words. To believe, in the sense

in which I regard the word as here used, is to give the assent of the understanding to the truths of the Gospel; to be baptized with the Spirit is to have the whole soul and spirit made conformable to the mind of Christ. The man who believes has an understanding of the things which pertain to salvation, he is acquainted with the doctrines contained in Scripture. The man who believes and is baptized joyfully accepts and cordially receives these truths as the glad tidings of salvation to himself. The man who believes without being baptized may be able to state and argue upon most abstruse and difficult points connected with the scheme of redemption. His creed may be orthodox, and his language may be scriptural. But he holds his views as he does any abstract truth in philosophy, which has no influence upon his life and habits. The man who believes and is baptized finds in the objects of his faith the source of his life. The one is like him who reasons upon the uses of the sun, the wind, and the rain, in bringing the fruits of the earth to maturity, who can explain philosophically the precise end subserved by each in the work of vegetation, but from whose garden the fertilizing dew of morn, the fructifying rays of the mid-day orb, and the refreshing breezes of evening, are alike excluded by a rank growth of noxious weeds. The other resembles him who, whatever he may know of the philosophy of the process, finds that the plants tended by himself and scrupulously weeded are at once swelled by the rains, ripened by the sun, fanned and firmed by the winds of heaven. To all that the one can say upon the powers of nature, the other can add this further testimony—They have ripened my crops. To all that the speculative disciple can set forth of the nature of God, and of His doings with angels or men, the true Christian can add this further testimony—He has saved my soul.

### III.

“John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”—Acts i. 5.

Some remarks which might have here found a place

have been already anticipated in speaking of an earlier passage. But it may be well to call attention more particularly to the aspect in which the two baptisms formerly noticed are here viewed. The period in which these words are spoken may be characterised as one rather of waiting than of action. The old covenant had passed away with the voice, "It is finished." But the new era had not fairly commenced. The great commission had been given, but prospectively. The disciples were not to carry it immediately into effect, but to tarry at Jerusalem till they should receive power from on high. And here Jesus speaks of baptism as belonging, not to this period, but to the past and the future. Looking back to the past, he says, "John truly baptized with water." His baptism belonged to an order of things which has passed away. Its purpose is answered. Its end is accomplished: and it is to be numbered among the things that were. Looking forward to the future, he says, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." A different baptism from that which has gone before awaits you. What you will have to do with from this time, is not the ritual but the spiritual.

So far the teaching of this passage seems clear and explicit. But it is nevertheless contended that Christian baptism is something distinct and separate from both of these mentioned in the text; that though John's has passed away, another baptism with water has come in its place; that though the Spirit has been given, the sign is still to be continued. All I shall say at present upon this point is, that this ritual baptism is not to be found in this text, and that the general bearing of the passage is against the supposition. Jesus draws a broad line of distinction between the two eras, and that in respect of their baptisms. John's we know to have been "with water unto repentance." The Saviour's we know to be "with the Spirit." If we retain a baptism identical in character with the former, we seem to confound things that differ, to shut our eyes to the fact that Messiah, "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances," "blotting out the hand-writing

of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross," Eph. ii. 12 ; Col. ii. 14.

#### IV.

"[Peter said,] Of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."—ACTS i. 21, 22.

The baptism of John here is equivalent to the ministry of John, or rather the time at which that ministry was exercised. But the way in which the expression is introduced shews how clearly that baptism belonged to the past, how thoroughly it had identified itself with one portion of time, the "beginning" of the ministry of Jesus Christ, or rather the time in which the events preparatory to that ministry took place. Peter, when at Cesarea, announces to Cornelius that the word which was published by Jesus Christ "began from Galilee, *after* the baptism which John preached," Acts x. 37. In like manner Paul at Antioch, speaking of the Saviour, says that "John had first preached, *before His coming*, the baptism of repentance," Acts xiii. 24. Both apostles are thus agreed that this baptism belonged to a period which had passed when they spoke, and that it synchronizes only with events before, or at the very commencement of, the ministry of Jesus Christ. And hence, when John preached it, he is represented as "saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him *which should come after him*, that is, on Christ Jesus," Acts xix. 4. Now, as we have already seen, this baptism of John was "the baptism of repentance," baptism "with water unto repentance," a water-baptism in which the subject was called upon to exercise repentance. But every ritual baptism which is now practised is of the same character. It is a baptism "with water unto repentance," an outward baptism which, whenever and however administered, in infancy or in manhood, with much or with little water, is represented as testifying

the necessity of repentance, the necessity of the baptized person being or becoming a true penitent. To practise such a baptism now is to mistake the signs of the times, to go back to "the rudiments of the world," and after "having begun in the Spirit," to seek to be "made perfect by the flesh."

An objection, however, may be founded on the words of Peter, to the view taken in these pages, of the date at which the Gospel dispensation properly speaking begins. Do not the words of the apostle, it may be said, shew that the baptism of John was regarded as the epoch at which a new order of things commenced? If not, why is it introduced here as a point to which the personal experience of the new apostle must go back?—I answer to this, 1. That the baptism of John was preparatory to and contemporary with the entrance of Jesus upon His public ministry. The object here was to select one who was an eye-witness of what had been done by the Lord Jesus in the fulfilment of His ministry. That ministry went back in date to the baptism of John. He who could testify of the things transacted all along it, must go back in his experience to the time of John's baptism, that being the time of its commencement. But, 2. even if it could be shewn that Peter attached importance to John's baptism, or considered it the beginning of the Gospel dispensation, his views would not therefore be binding upon believers. This statement is not so monstrous as it may appear to some at first sight. Peter spake here before the Holy Ghost had been given. Christ had promised that this heavenly messenger should lead the disciples into all truth. But if they begin to legislate for His people before they have received this Spirit, we should not be surprised if they are allowed to fall into error. It is true they appealed here to God, but while the whole disposing of the lot is of the Lord, it does not follow that every appeal to the lot must be sanctioned by Him. The name of Matthias never appears again in the Word of God. But the name of another appears, the record of whose deeds occupy the larger portion of this book of Acts, while his epistles are longer and

more numerous than those of any other apostle. Paul is at great pains to prove that he is an apostle, entitled to the name, and in no respect behind the very chiefest. John tells us that the wall of the new Jerusalem has twelve foundations, and in them the names of *the twelve* apostles of the Lamb. The names of eleven we know. They were selected by the Saviour himself in His lifetime. If Matthias was the twelfth, where is there place for Paul? or if Paul was the twelfth, where is there place for Matthias? One or other has no title to the office. But Paul *was* "an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead," Gal. i. 1. Matthias therefore is excluded from the college, and his election was a mistake. But if so, then the reasonings on which it was urged may not have been altogether free from mistake, and nothing can be inferred from them. If it could be shewn that at this time Peter viewed the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel dispensation, as commencing with John, this fact would not suffice to overthrow the plain statements of Jesus which go to prove the contrary.

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## CHAPTER IV.

EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, IN WHICH THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM IS MENTIONED, AND RELATING TO EVENTS ON AND AFTER THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

THE passages to be considered in this chapter belong to the last of the periods embraced in the historical books of the New Testament, commencing with the day of Pentecost, or the events related in the second chapter of Acts. It is not without reason that this point has been selected as that from which to date a new period, for a baptism which was formerly *future* now becomes *present*. We

have already passed the point at which John's baptism ceased to be in force. We come now to the point at which Christ's begins to exist. From the day of Pentecost, the prophecy begins to be fulfilled, "He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost," the promise to be verified, "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you." From this time disciples are released from the injunction, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem," and authorized to carry into effect the commission, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them." According to the view taken of the commission in these pages, it is neither more nor less than an injunction to communicate that power which they now experienced, to impart that Spirit which they now received, to bring others under the dominion of those influences of which themselves now became the subjects. The history of this period, the history of its earliest portion, as recorded by the pen of inspiration, may be expected to corroborate this view, or to confute it. In the course of this history we may look for instances in which this commission was acted on. Cases do occur in which the early disciples baptized. A consideration of these may serve to shew in some measure what was their view of Christian baptism. As stated in the introductory chapter, the conduct of an apostle in any particular instance is not to be regarded as necessarily putting the true meaning upon the divine command. But by comparing Scripture with Scripture, ascertaining how apostles acted, and how Scripture speaks of their acts, we shall have confirmatory evidence of the view which is to be taken of their commission. To this evidence let us now turn.

## I.

"Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized."—Acts ii. 38, 41.

In this passage we read that the multitudes were exhorted by Peter to repent and be baptized, and then that as many as gladly received the word were baptized. So

far the language of the historian does not militate against the view taken above of Christian baptism. The passage is intelligible on the supposition that that baptism is spiritual. Let us examine the context and see whether it bears out this meaning. In the preceding chapter (ver. 5) Jesus is represented as saying to the disciples, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." In this chapter we read of the fulfilment of the promise. This attracted the notice of many, and it was said by some, "These men are full of new wine," verse 13. Peter, with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and pointed out a prophecy of Joel which was here fulfilled, and which related to the pouring out of the Spirit. He then goes on to shew that it was Christ, who, being now ascended to the Father, had sent His Spirit to carry on His work. At the outset of his address he says—What you see is the fulfilment of the promise, "I will pour out my Spirit." Towards the close of his address he says—"Jesus, having received the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." In his discourse he vindicates the apostles from the base insinuation of drunkenness, by pointing out the real character of what was now witnessed, as a pouring out, a shedding forth of the Spirit of God, and at the same time charges his hearers with having put the Son of God to death. His words affect the multitude. They are pricked in their heart, and exclaim, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And then it is that Peter replies, "Repent, and be baptized." The burden of his first address is this—What you see is the baptism of the Spirit,—you have been the murderers of Jesus. The second point is that which touches the people, and leads them to ask, What shall we do? The answer is, "Repent, and be baptized." The repentance points to the sin with which he had charged them. Does the baptism point to that of which he had been speaking, or to what had been administered in the days of John? Whether does the use of this word most naturally suggest a topic on which he had just been discoursing, and which in the previous chapter is referred to as a *baptism*, and in the course of this address as a *pouring*



out, a *shedding forth*; or does it point to a fact which they had witnessed in the time of John, but of which there may have been no actual instance for many a day?

In favour of the latter supposition, it may be said that Peter speaks both of a baptism *and* of the reception of the Holy Ghost. In his reply to the multitude he calls upon them to repent and be baptized; and he gives the assurance, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Do not his words, it may be said, indicate that there is to be a baptism accompanying the repentance, but that the gift of the Holy Ghost is something additional to, and quite separate from this baptism? In reply to this objection, I quote the words of Calvin upon another passage (Acts xix. 5), which will shortly come under consideration. Calvin views the words, "They were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus," as pointing to the baptism of the Spirit, and then adds, "Nor is this interpretation inconsistent with what is stated afterwards, that 'when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.' For Luke does not relate two different things, but follows a mode of narration familiar to the Hebrews, who first propose a subject generally, and then unfold it more in detail. This is obvious from the very connection of the words; for he says, 'When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.' The latter clause describes the kind of baptism intended in the former."—(*Institutes*, IV., xv., 18, Allen's translation.) If the language of the passage Calvin refers to can be thus interpreted, so can that of the passage before us; and instead of saying, There is first a baptism with water, and then a promise of the Spirit, we may adopt the language of Calvin and say, Paul does not here speak of two things. The latter clause describes the kind of baptism intended in the former.

In support of this view it may be further remarked, that unless the expression, they "were baptized," in the 41st verse, relates to the Spirit's work, there is no account whatever of the fulfilment of the promise. On the sup-

position that water-baptism is spoken of, the historian tells us—Peter calls upon the people to repent and be baptized, and also assures them that they should receive the Holy Ghost, and to this assertion adds that there is a promise to this effect to them, and to their children, and to all that the Lord their God should call. He then records the fact that as many as gladly received his word were baptized, but he does not tell us that they experienced the fulfilment of the promise. He records the fact that the sign was administered. He leaves us uninformed as to whether the word of God was redeemed, and His promise made good. He tells us of their steadfastness, of their prayerfulness, of their large-hearted benevolence, of their gladness and singleness of heart, of their piety, and of their being well spoken of among men; but he never once intimates that there was a source and spring of all this, in the grace that was poured upon them by the gift of God's Spirit. On the other view there is no such omission. The historian says,—The representations of the apostle were brought home to the minds of many. Some there were who gladly received his word. These were baptized with God's Spirit as the apostle had promised, and the fruit of this baptism was soon apparent, for they were changed men. They had been murderers of Jesus. They became steadfast adherents of the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. They had insultingly cried, "He saved others, himself He cannot save. He trusted in God: let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God," Matt. xxvii. 42, 43. They were now men of prayer. They had been covetous and guilty of blasphemy. They became ready to distribute, and rejoiced in the praises of God. And their lives told upon others, for "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

Once more, this view brings out a parallel otherwise wanting between the words of Peter here, and the words of the same apostle after healing the lame man at the gate of the temple, as recorded in the next chapter. There, too, he prefers the charge of crucifying the Lord of glory,

and calls upon the people to repent and be converted. The circumstances of the individuals he addresses on the two occasions are the same. We should expect the language addressed to them to have much in common. But if water-baptism be here intended, then Peter in the one instance invites them to repentance and attention to an ordinance, while in the other he directs their thoughts to repentance and the work of conversion. If water-baptism be so important that it must have a place in the one address, why is it omitted in the other? If conversion be the one thing needful in the latter instance, why does the outward rite take precedence of it in the former? But if the baptism here be that of the Spirit, the words of the apostle in the two cases completely harmonize. In the one he says—"Repent, and be baptized." Yield yourselves to the Spirit's influences. On these you may count, for the word of God is pledged, and they who ask shall receive. In the other he says—"Repent, and be converted." Make it the object of your seeking to obtain those influences by which you will be enabled to cease from your own works, and to do the works of God. In other words—Yield yourselves to the Spirit of God.

## II.

"When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now, when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."—Acts viii. 12-17.

Two objections to the view of baptism advocated in these pages may be grounded on this passage. Let us consider them in order.

1. Philip seems to have baptized with water. That he did so is most probable. It might be argued from this

consideration, that Simon, after having been baptized, was declared by Peter to be still an unregenerate man, and also that the same Philip is related in the same chapter to have gone down to the water with the Ethiopian eunuch, and there to have baptized him ; while to many a still stronger argument will be found in the statement in the 16th verse, that (after their baptism) the Holy Ghost had not fallen upon any of the Samaritans. But of that again. I admit that both here and in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, water-baptism is spoken of. The question now to be considered is—Does this fact shake the conclusion already arrived at? Is it inconsistent with the supposition that Jesus enjoined a spiritual and not a ritual baptism? That it is not, I argue from the following considerations.

(1.) Philip was not an apostle. This is generally admitted on the ground that the apostles continued at Jerusalem, and that two of their number were subsequently sent down to impart those influences which Philip did not himself communicate. It is further observable that there is a Philip among the seven deacons (chap. vi. 5), and that his name occurs immediately after that of Stephen, whose death is related in the close of the seventh chapter. It seems most natural to regard the person now spoken of as this Philip. Luke has finished all he has to say of Stephen, and given a short statement of the persecuting conduct of Saul, whose name is introduced in connection with the death of Stephen. He then passes on to the second of the deacons, and tells us, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." If this be the Philip, let us inquire whether we are warranted in considering his conduct immaculate, and himself infallible. The first that we read of him is in the sixth chapter of this book, already referred to. "There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." For the better ordering of things, the apostles recommended the multitude to look out seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, to be appointed over this business.

Seven men were chosen, of whom Stephen was one, and he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Whether the other six answered to the character the apostles recommended we are not told. The express mention of Stephen's being full of the Holy Ghost, and the silence of Luke with regard to the others, would rather induce the impression that they were, to say the least, not so completely under the Spirit's influence as he was. The seven having been chosen, the apostles laid their hands on them; but it is not said that God set His seal upon what had been done, by a fuller communication of the Spirit to these men. Whatever view be taken of the election of the deacons, it cannot be inferred that Philip, either before or in virtue of his appointment to this office, was filled with the Spirit. That he was a disciple is allowed. But that he would be infallibly preserved from error in his practices is a matter of a very different character. If even apostles, without the full communication of the Spirit's influences, could err, it should not surprise us if a person in Philip's circumstances were allowed to fall into some error.

(2.) The persons whom Philip baptized were not Jews. This remark is not intended to imply that there was one code for the Jew, and another for the Gentile, under the Christian dispensation. Far from it. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. But before the coming of Christ, Gentiles had been admitted as proselytes upon a profession of faith, and the administration of water-baptism. Philip was probably a Jew. It is most likely that he shared in those feelings which clung so long to the apostles themselves, and led them to look for a kingdom of which Judea was to be the centre, and that he was slow to come to the conviction that the middle wall of partition had been thrown down, so that now Jew and Gentile were upon the same footing. We know that at a later period in the history of the Church, there were some who came down from Judea to Antioch, and who were unwilling to let their Judaism go for nothing, and "taught the brethren and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of

Moses, ye cannot be saved," Acts xv. 1. If *then* Jews could insist on so great a conformity to their law as was implied in submission to circumcision, when that was done away in Christ, it is not inconceivable that Philip *now*, when the Church had been so short a time organized, should have thought it his duty to administer the simple rite of water-baptism to Samaritans, and to an Ethiopian eunuch, even if it should appear that that rite too had been done away in Christ. But it is not said that he insisted upon the performance of the rite, or that he urged it, or even recommended it. The people believed and were baptized. The Ethiopian eunuch requested the administration of the rite, and Philip said, "Thou *mayest*," not thou *must*. May he not have viewed it as a harmless rite, without considering it a binding ordinance? In any view I believe him to have been wrong, but I think his conduct can be accounted for on natural principles, without tracing it to the guidance of God's Spirit, and setting it up as a model for all ages.

(3.) The words of Luke seem to intimate that the sense in which the word baptize is used in the 12th verse is not that which it ordinarily bears when baptisms in this period are referred to. In the 16th verse he says, "As yet He [the Holy Ghost] was fallen upon none of them." Why should this parenthesis have been interposed? Why should he not have gone on to tell us at once—The apostles fulfilled their mission? Was there anything in the preceding part of the narrative to make the reader imagine that the Holy Ghost *had been given*? His name is never mentioned. No; but Luke has said of the Samaritans, "They were baptized," and he has formerly used this expression for the Spirit's work. And therefore his language in this place might have been considered as equivalent to—They had received the Holy Ghost. And so, before he tells of the apostles imparting that Spirit, he says, "For as yet He was fallen upon none of them." It is as if he had said—Do not be surprised that the apostles should have come to impart the Holy Ghost. I have, indeed, said that the Samaritans were baptized. But by

the use of these words in this place, I do not mean to imply that the Spirit in all His fulness had been given. But if his words mean this much, they surely shew that without such an explanation they might have been taken as pointing to spiritual baptism, and therefore confirm us in considering this to be the thing alluded to in the second chapter of this book. Here the baptism is followed by the explanation—The Holy Ghost had fallen upon none of them,—and by the narrative of its being afterwards communicated. May we not infer that when no such explanation is given, and no such addition made to the narrative, the baptism is itself the communication of the Spirit?

2. Of the persons who had been baptized by Philip, and upon whom the Spirit had not yet fallen, it is said (ver. 16), "They were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." But it is admitted that these persons had received water-baptism. Therefore baptism *into the name* is baptism *with water*, and not with the Spirit.

This is to my mind a much more serious difficulty in the way of the opinion I have advocated, than what has just been considered. It seems to stand so much in the way of it, that for long I was disposed to regard it as insuperable, and to believe that whatever might be the testimony of other passages, this was decisive upon the point that water-baptism is baptism into the name, and therefore that the common interpretation of Matt. xxviii. 19 must, after all, be accepted. I have no wish to underrate the evidence fairly deducible from this or from any one passage. But I leave the reader to judge whether the following considerations tend in any measure to shake the impression, which at first sight seems inevitable, that the baptism which Philip administered, and which is admitted to be water-baptism, is the same which Jesus commanded. I observe that,

(1.) If baptism with water be that which Jesus enjoined, the difficulty of explaining the passage in question is by no means lessened. It is objected to the spiritual interpretation of the command, that it is at variance with the facts

of this case, inasmuch as of those who had received, not the spiritual but the ritual baptism, it is said, "They were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." But quite as strong an objection can be taken to the ritual reading of the command, on the ground that it is inconsistent with the facts of this case. Jesus is represented as saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." And yet here is an instance of a man who believed and was baptized, but who was so far from being saved that he was declared by an apostle to be "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Upon the best of authority, the two facts of believing and being baptized make up the condition of one in a state of salvation. But here is a man in whom these two facts are united, who both believes and is baptized, and yet this man is not in a state of salvation. Either, therefore, the faith or the baptism of which he was the subject must have been different from that to which the Saviour alluded. Most persons will probably say that his faith was defective, not his baptism. But even this refuge will not furnish an escape from the difficulty, for an apostle elsewhere says, "Baptism doth save," attributing that to the baptism alone which the Saviour predicates of the faith and the baptism together. The only rational inference from comparing these passages is, that true Christian baptism carries faith along with it. Baptism saves, unbelief damns. Therefore these two cannot consist. Where there is baptism, there cannot be unbelief, there must be faith. Where there is unbelief, where there is not faith, there cannot be baptism. To say, therefore, that Simon had not Christian faith, but that he had received Christian baptism, is to utter a contradiction, to say that he was at once saved and lost—lost because of his want of faith, saved because of his baptism. But such cannot be the case. If he had not true faith, he was not a saved man, and therefore he had not true baptism. The conclusion is inevitable that the baptism which Philip had administered was not the baptism which Jesus had commanded. To the man, therefore, who says—The spiritual meaning cannot be the true one, it does not fit the neces-



sities of the passage, it proves itself untrue,—it can be easily retorted—The ritual meaning is untenable. So far from *its* answering the necessities of the passage, it lands us in contradictions, it leads us to the conclusion that the same man at the same moment was lost and saved, it proves itself to be manifestly untrue. If we adopt this meaning of the command, the difficulties of the passage are, to say the least, not lessened.

(2.) The word *only*, in this verse, seems inconsistent with the ritual view of baptism. The historian says, “The Holy Ghost was fallen upon none of them, *only* they were baptized.” The inference is, that what goes before the word *only*, and what follows, must have had something in common; that the difference between the two states was more one of degree than of kind. If we adopt the ritual meaning of the word baptize, we seem landed in the conclusion, that the man who had received the rite possessed some measure of the Spirit. It is impossible to take this view without attributing some virtue to the outward act of baptism. The persons referred to had not received the Spirit, but they had received something which approximated to that. The baptism is regarded as including all who had submitted to the external rite. Simon was one of these. Although, therefore, the Spirit had not fallen upon him, he must be viewed as having taken a step in the right direction. And yet Peter says, “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter.”

(3.) The expression, “They *were* baptized into the name,” is a very peculiar construction in the original. It is not the imperfect tense, as in the 12th verse. It is not the ordinary pluperfect, with the auxiliary verb *to be*, εἶμι, equivalent to our *had been baptized*. But the participle is used with another auxiliary verb, βαπτισμένοι ὑπάρχον. Now, although this verb ὑπάρχω is often used seemingly in the same sense as εἶμι, to be, its first meaning is *to begin*. And it is remarkable that this is the only passage in the New Testament, in which it is connected with βαπτίζω. May there not have been a reason for this

departure from the usual phraseology? May not the intention of the sacred writer have been to speak of a baptism begun, but not fully completed?

(4.) The whole phrase, "The name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," does not occur, but simply, "The name of the Lord Jesus;" while the expression in the first clause of the verse, "He was *fallen upon*," ἐπιπεπτωκός, is descriptive of a very full communication of spiritual influences. It is that which is used to describe the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius and those with him, Acts x. 44, and also the similar outpouring on the day of Pentecost (see Acts xi. 15), so that the statement of the historian amounts to this—They were not *filled with the Spirit*, they had been, or had begun to be, *baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus*.

Combining these different positions, may not the following be regarded as a satisfactory explanation of the passage? The Holy Ghost "had fallen upon none of them." None could be said to have received such a full measure of the Spirit's influences as we are warranted to look for in the confirmed disciple. The most that could be said of any of them was, that they had taken the initial step in the way of salvation. They had recognised the Lord Jesus as the Saviour, and were resting on Him for salvation. The eyes of their understanding had been, to some extent, enlightened to discern spiritual things, and they were thus in a measure prepared for the fuller communications of the Spirit, which were imparted on the arrival of the apostles.

This view obviates the difficulties attaching to the other supposition. It does not confound the distinction between ritual and spiritual, and make the former appear to be part of the latter. It does away with the necessity of supposing a man to have and to want, at the same time, that which is necessary for salvation; to be at once a child of God, and a child of the devil. It represents those who had so far done the will of God as to believe in the name of His Son Christ Jesus, as being led to know more of the doctrine whether it be of God, by God's

Spirit coming and dwelling in them, while it leaves him who had nothing but an empty form, still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

To this view some will perhaps object, that it makes Christian baptism a variable matter, a thing of degrees. But is this really an objection? Rather, is it not true to fact? If the expression translated "were baptized," can be rendered, *were beginning*, or *had begun to be baptized*, the passage will teach that the baptism in this case, at least, was not at once but gradually accomplished. And even independently of this, both Scripture and experience seem to shew that conversion is not always instantaneous, but that the understanding and the affections are often gradually brought into obedience to the mind of Christ. There is a difference between seeing men as trees walking, and seeing every man clearly—between believing on the testimony of another, and believing from personal experience. And the language of the historian may not inadequately describe some such difference as this, in the case of the Samaritans.

But if this view be correct, then the verse in question is rescued from the ritual interpretation. The word *baptize*, when used (verses 12, 13) of water-baptism, is followed by an explanation. But it again occurs (verse 16) where it must be held as pointing to a spiritual influence,—the only difference between its use here and in the second chapter of the Acts being, that there it points, without restriction or limitation, to the communication of the Spirit's influences; while here the construction of the sentence is such as to shew that the baptism referred to was but the first step in that fuller act of baptism which immediately follows; or, perhaps, more truly the language of the historian should be regarded as teaching, that instead of having been baptized, the Samaritans were but feeling their way towards that baptism, the crowning act of which is recorded in the next verse.

## III.

“As they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”—Acts viii. 36-38.

Some of the remarks made upon the last passage apply equally to this. I observe further, that this case is unlike that of baptisms in modern times. There are few Gospel ministers, I believe, in any section of the Church, who would administer the ordinance of baptism to an individual in answer to a request preferred at a first interview. The journals of missionaries tell us of persons being kept for months in suspense, of examination after examination, of time being allowed to test the character, before the ordinance is administered. Even those at home who would not scruple to baptize an infant, when asked by a careless and ungodly parent, would hesitate about administering the rite to an adult without a somewhat lengthened and detailed examination. Probably no party could justly claim Philip as its model in administering the ordinance, and therefore for any to argue that because he used water so should they, is to rest their cause upon a precedent which they do not wholly follow.

But it is not sufficient to dismiss the passage with this general remark, as there is one argument that to many minds will appear convincing as to the correctness of Philip's procedure in this case. He was sent by an angel of the Lord unto Gaza. When there he was directed by the Spirit to join himself to the chariot of the eunuch. He was permitted to keep company with the eunuch up till the time that the ordinance was administered, and immediately thereafter he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, so that the eunuch saw him no more. From this the inference is, that Philip was sent for a purpose to the Ethiopian, and that that purpose included the adminis-

tering of the rite, as well as the imparting of instruction. In answer to this reasoning, I remark that,

1. We are not told particularly what instructions were given to Philip. We read in general that he was directed to join himself to the chariot. He found the eunuch reading in the book of Isaiah. It is natural to suppose that it was intended that Philip should explain to him the passage he was perusing. But whether he received any instructions as to the ordinance of baptism or not, the historian does not say. That he did administer it does not prove that he was directed by the Spirit to do so.

2. If Philip had received no instructions upon this point, his conduct can be accounted for by his previous history, without supposing water-baptism to be a Christian ordinance of perpetual obligation. He had been at Samaria. He had seen the ritual followed by the spiritual baptism. He was now brought into contact with an Ethiopian, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel. Even if he had regarded the ordinance as a Jewish ceremony, it should not surprise us that he thought it becoming to administer it in this case. Even apostles were hardly prepared for the announcement that the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was thrown down. Can we wonder if Philip should have thought it well to bridge over the distance which separated them by requiring conformity to this simple rite? More particularly when the request came from the eunuch, when the answer was, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." I am not sure but that there is here indicated an advance towards the truth in Philip's mind. At Samaria he baptized indiscriminately on a profession of belief, Simon himself not being rejected. Here, recollecting perhaps that he had thus acknowledged some who had no part nor lot in the matter, he says to the eunuch, "If thou believest *with all thine heart*, thou mayest." But if his views had changed in so short a space of time on the subject of baptism, it is possible that they might change again. If his ideas of the proper qualification had been modified, it is possible to conceive that he might by and by arrive at the con-

clusion that the qualification was itself the baptism, that to be really regenerated was Christian baptism, and that water had nothing to do with the subject. At all events, the early practice of a man whose views were liable to change cannot fairly be taken as a model for the Church in all ages.

3. The fact of Philip's being sent by the angel of the Lord, and caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, does not stamp all that he did in the interval with the divine approval. It was by divine direction that the children of Israel went out from Egypt into the desert. It was by divine direction that they crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan. But it would be a false inference from this that all they did in the interval was pleasing to God. For forty years long was He grieved with that generation. It was by God that Moses was appointed their leader, and Aaron his colleague. But both, we know, "trespassed against God among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh," Deut. xxxii. 51; while Aaron on another occasion yielded to their entreaties, and made the golden calf. There is no character in Old or New Testament history, except the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it can be said that his acts were faultless. And yet there are several who are spoken of as having been separated from the womb for some peculiar work. It was the Holy Spirit by whose direction Paul and Barnabas were sent forth *in company* on their mission, and yet their tempers seemed so incompatible that they separated and followed different routes. That Philip, therefore, was sent to Gaza by the angel, and removed from Gaza by the Spirit, does not prove that all he did at Gaza was faultless.

4. Even if it should be inferred from what follows that God still regarded Philip favourably, it would not necessarily follow that He approved of Philip's conduct in this particular. The impression in many minds is, that as God permitted Philip to baptize the eunuch, and then carried him to another quarter, God must have been satisfied with the course Philip had taken. But it is to be observed that many instances are recorded in Scripture of cases in which,

even after a marked sin had been committed, the historian goes on to speak as if the blessing of God continued to follow the person who had sinned. We read, for example, that Abraham on two occasions was guilty of deceit, and denied his wife, calling her his sister. And what are the very next facts recorded on the page of revelation? "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was *very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold*," Gen. xiii. 1, 2. "And the LORD *visited Sarah* as He had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For *Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son* in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him," Gen. xxi. 1, 2. Isaac was guilty of the like sin, and yet immediately after we read, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year *an hundred-fold*, and the LORD *blessed him*. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: for he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him," Gen. xxvi. 12-14. Jacob, in the very act of deceiving his father and outreaching his brother, obtained the blessing, a blessing which was confirmed by God, Gen. xxvii.

Let it not be thought from these remarks that I mean to affirm that our ideas of right and wrong are to be subverted, that a premium is placed by God upon sin, that the Scripture rule is reversed, "Be sure your sin will find you out," that the transgressor shall go free, and his iniquity be unnoticed or unpunished by God. Far from it. On the contrary, I believe that even in the case of these patriarchs a far more intimate relation might perhaps be traced between their sins and their sorrows than is commonly supposed. Abraham teaches Sarah to call him her *brother*, and Sarah gives Abraham Hagar *to wife*, from which step dispeace is introduced into the family. *Isaac instructs Rebecca to deceive Abimelech*, and *Rebecca puts Jacob on the way of deceiving Isaac*. Jacob sins against *his father and his brother*, and he is banished for twenty years *from home*, and finds his *father-in-law* con-

tinually overreaching and deceiving him. It might not be far from the truth to say of any of these that his sin had found him out. But what I mean to assert is, that there is not so close a connection between conduct, and the *next recorded facts* of Scripture, as that we can estimate the character of the conduct from the immediately following narrative. If it were so, then we should have to conclude that deceit was pleasing to God, because in the case of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, we find that immediately after it is recorded of each that he was guilty of deceit, it is added that the blessing of God continued to rest on the patriarch. What we ought to infer is, that Scripture must be compared with Scripture, that acts must be tried by principles, that we must not hastily conclude that acts are pleasing to God because the next recorded circumstance is the bestowal of a blessing; for, though God has not deserted the individual, yet long after, fruits of an evil kind may be found to flow from acts of an evil character.

Applying these principles to the case of Philip, it will be seen that even if it should be made out that he was the object of the divine complacency at Azotus, it by no means follows that he was right in baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert of Gaza. And therefore the conclusion that the spiritual and not the ritual is the Christian baptism, is not touched by this passage.

#### IV.

"Ananias . . . putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."—Acts ix. 17, 18.

"[He said,] And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."—Acts xxii. 16.

The first of these passages fully bears out the interpretation given above to the command of the Saviour. Much of what has been said upon Acts ii. 41 would apply



to it. Luke tells us that Ananias was sent to Paul for two reasons—1. That he might receive his sight; and, 2. That he might be filled with the Holy Ghost. We are prepared to hear that these two purposes were answered by his visit. And what says the historian? “Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.” The first part of the sentence records the fulfilment of one object of Ananias’ mission. If the second does not record the fulfilment of the other, we are not told of its being fulfilled at all. It is the most important subject of the two, but unless spiritual baptism be here referred to, our thoughts are led away from it to quite another subject, and we are left in ignorance in regard to this matter on which hinged the success of Paul’s subsequent labours. But it cannot be. The sacred penman, after introducing a subject, and recording the purpose of God, does not leave us in the dark as to whether or no that purpose was accomplished. His words are properly interpreted in accordance with what has gone before, of the baptism of the Spirit. Ananias was sent that Paul might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Paul received his sight, and was baptized with the Spirit.

Compare with this the parallel account of the same visit of Ananias, as given in Paul’s speech at Jerusalem (chap. xxii.). He says, verse 13, Ananias “came unto me, and stood and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.” Here we are told of the first part of Ananias’ errand being announced, and carried into effect. It accords with the words of Luke in the ninth chapter. A little further on Paul says—Ananias said, “And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” This agrees with the second part of Luke’s narrative, on the supposition that the baptism is that of the Spirit. On the other supposition Paul omits entirely this part of Ananias’ mission. But his own words shew that this is what he refers to, for he gives the words of Ananias, “Be baptized, and

*wash away thy sins.*" The washing with water could never cleanse from sin, it could only typify this cleansing. Ananias speaks of a real cleansing, and calls upon Paul to wash away his sins, *calling upon the name of the Lord*. If the two passages are to harmonize, and if the historian considers the speech of the apostle inserted in this book to be consistent with his own narrative, the baptism of which Paul speaks must be viewed as a baptism into the name of the Lord—that is, a spiritual baptism.

## V.

"The baptism which John preached."—Acts x. 37.

"John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."—Acts xiii. 24.

These notices of John's baptism by Peter at Cesarea, and Paul at Antioch, belong to the period now under consideration. But as they do not call for any remarks additional to what has been already said on the same subject, the reader is referred to Chapter II., Section V., and Chapter III., Sections III., IV.

## VI.

"Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."—Acts x. 47, 48.

"As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."—Acts xi. 15, 16.

In the first of these passages we have water-baptism enjoined by Peter. Peter was an apostle. He had received the Spirit with the others on the day of Pentecost. He was the foremost to stand up and call the multitudes to repentance. He had opened the door of faith to the Jews, and now God makes choice of him, that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. He is at Cesarea by the express direction of God himself. Cornelius, in answer to prayer, has been told to listen to

Peter. Peter asks, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized?" and commands them to be baptized. Do not all these circumstances lead to the belief that Peter must have spoken the mind of God, and that since water-baptism is commanded by Him, it must be in accordance with the divine will that it should be observed? Such is the argument deduced from this passage in support of water-baptism. Let us test its weight.

*Peter was an apostle.* But he denied his Master, and even after the ascension erred with the rest in the appointment of Matthias, as a colleague. But *Peter had now received the Spirit*, and that Spirit had been promised to lead him into all truth.—Still, Peter needed an express revelation from heaven to teach him that he should not call any man common or unclean. Obviously the gift of the Spirit did not imply a full and complete knowledge of the will of God, when he was so slow to learn that the command to preach the Gospel to every creature included the Gentiles. He had been bred a Jew. He naturally attached weight to the peculiar privileges of God's ancient people, and seems to have had difficulty in overcoming his scruples about keeping company with, or coming unto, one of another nation (verse 28). While he could not shut his eyes to the fact that Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs in the Gospel, his long practice of ritual worship may have led him to think it necessary that they should, to some extent, conform to these rites. He considers that they are already baptized with the Spirit, for he says, in relating the incident, "The Holy Ghost fell on them. . . . Then remembered I the word of the Lord, . . . . Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost," Acts xi. 15, 16. In urging the further application of water he makes his appeal to man, he does not allege that he has a command from God or from Christ. He does not point to the apostolic commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach, baptizing." But he asks, "Can any man forbid water?" He commands them to be baptized in (ἐν), not into (εἰς, as in Matt. xxviii. 19) the name of the Lord. His words seem equivalent to this—If water-baptism be a privilege, will

any man say that these have less right to it than we, when God hath made no difference between us? If anything be inferred from this language, it should be that they may claim the administration of the rite, not that they must submit to it.

Further, when the apostles met at Jerusalem to consider the propriety or impropriety of enforcing circumcision upon the Gentiles, Peter spoke his mind, and agreed to the deliverance which was come to, to lay upon them no greater burden than what are specified as "these necessary things," Acts xv. 28, 29. In his speech, as recorded by Luke, and in the deliverance of the assembly, there is not one word about water-baptism. The apostles seem to consider that what they have enjoined comprise all the necessary things binding on the Gentiles, as far as ritual worship is concerned, and even include something moral in the list. If water-baptism be a thing of paramount importance, if it be a thing of permanent obligation in the Christian Church, how is it that there is here not the slightest mention of the subject? If, especially, as many allege, it was to take the place of circumcision, how comes it that when an edict is given forth, declaring that circumcision is abolished, no clause is added to the effect that water-baptism is established? When the Gentiles are told—ye are free from the rite of circumcision, why are they not informed—ye are bound down to the rite of baptism? I humbly conceive that whatever may have been the practice of Peter, neither himself nor the other apostles, at the time of this meeting, could have viewed water-baptism as a binding ordinance of permanent obligation in the Church of Christ.

But that the zeal of the apostle in administering the rite to Cornelius and his friends was wholly misplaced, an advocate of water-baptism, and that as administered not to the believing penitent alone, but even to the unconscious babe, will testify. Wardlaw, referring to the circumstance that we have no recorded account of the baptism with water of the *twelve*, or of the *hundred and twenty*, on the day of Pente-

cost, observes:—"It is surely little better than trifling to institute an inquiry whether those on whom 'the promise of the Father'—the 'power from on high'—so wonderfully came, were ever subjected to the sprinkling or the immersion of water! In such a case, it was a matter of very little moment indeed, whether they were or were not.—That they were *not*, seems far more likely; perhaps, may be held for certain. They were already believers in the resurrection of Jesus; and their baptism—not the mere emblem, but the celestial reality—came immediately from the hand of their glorified Master; who, having 'ascended on high, leading captivity captive,' had received these 'gifts for men.' 'HE, being by the right hand of God exalted, shed forth that which' the assembled multitudes 'saw and heard' with such overwhelming amazement. Truly the baptism with water might well be dispensed with for this."—(*Infant Baptism*, p. 267, &c.) Whatever difference there may have been in detail between the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the gift of the Spirit at Cesarea, the general character of the two events was the same, for Peter, speaking of the latter, says, "The Holy Ghost fell on them, *as on us at the beginning*," Acts xi. 15. If the language of Wardlaw bears upon the one case, it bears equally upon the other. And, therefore, to the question—Should Cornelius and his companions have been baptized with water, after being baptized with the Spirit? we might answer in the foregoing words, "In such a case, it was a matter of very little moment indeed, whether they were or not.—Truly the baptism with water might well be dispensed with for this." And if so, the command that they should be baptized with water was wholly uncalled for.

If anything further be necessary on this point, it can be shewn that the error into which, on this view, Peter is supposed to have fallen, is quite in keeping with his character, and with his actions at a later period. On the supposition that water-baptism had been abrogated, to what does it amount? It was an attempt to carry the practices of the law into the domain of the Gospel, to

bring the rites of Judaism into the region of Christianity, and having begun in the Spirit, to make perfect by the flesh. Now, this is an error into which, I say, not only that Peter, humanly speaking, would be apt to fall, but into which we have an inspired testimony that he was actually permitted to fall. Paul writes to the Galatians (ii. 11), "When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For, before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" The time referred to in this passage is uncertain. It may have been before the meeting of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 1, &c.), but it must have been *after the visit to Cesarea*. Whenever it was, there was not only dissimulation in the conduct of Peter, there was also an attempt to bind down some of the practices of Judaism upon the Gentiles. He had at first consorted with the Gentiles, but, fearing lest his Jewish brethren should censure his conduct, he withdrew himself, and would not keep company with them unless they conformed to the customs of the Jews. And, therefore, Paul says to him, "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" If Peter sought to *compel* the Gentiles to Judaize, it is quite in character that he should have *commanded* them to Judaize. If, apostle though he was, and after he had been favoured by a remarkable measure of the Spirit's influences, he could still so far err as to lay himself open to reproof from Paul, it need not surprise us that his conduct here should be not without blemish. To admit that he commanded Cornelius

to be baptized with water in (not into) the name of the Lord, is not to say that water-baptism is universally binding, for the very same reasoning would serve to shew that because he compelled the Gentiles to live as do the Jews, the same practices are still binding on the Church.

## VII.

"When she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us."—ACTS xvi. 15.

"He took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."—ACTS xvi. 33.

Those who contend for a ritual baptism—but restricted to adults—generally take up the ground that both the household of Lydia and the household of the jailor consisted of converted persons. They point to the fact that the jailor is said to have rejoiced, "*believing in God with all his house*;" and that when Paul and Silas "entered into the house of Lydia," they were received by "*the brethren*." On their shewing, it is a possible supposition that both households had received the Spirit. And we are, therefore, warranted in supposing that this is what the historian refers to when he says that they were baptized.

But the spiritual is not only a possible interpretation, it is that which best suits the context. There is no mention of water in either case. It has often been objected to the mode of baptism by immersion, in the case of the jailor, that the baptism took place at midnight, in a prison, and without time for any previous preparation on his part. All such objections disappear on the spiritual view. That the individuals concerned should have received the gift of the Spirit on these occasions is in keeping with what we have seen in other instances. The bestowal of the Spirit was the following up of a work already begun. When we are told that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, we are prepared to hear not only that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, but that she received the Spirit of God, and was baptized therewith. When we read of the jailor's anxiety for the interests of his soul,

that the prisoners directed his thoughts to Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and find that their words, instead of being scorned or scoffed at, were received in such a manner that encouragement and opportunity was given to them to go on, and speak unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house; when we find that the heart of the jailor was softened to such an extent that he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, we are not surprised to hear that he and all his straight-way received the Spirit. It is of a piece with what took place at Pentecost. It is a statement in character with the history which tells us that while Peter yet spake to Cornelius and the others, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."

This interpretation is further in keeping with what follows. Luke says of Lydia, "When she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." On the supposition that she was baptized with the Spirit, this is the genuine fruit which followed that baptism. Having received at the hands of these heavenly messengers spiritual things, she was not loath to communicate to them of her carnal things. The gift of the Spirit sufficiently accounts for the manifestation of her hospitality. A work of grace had been wrought upon her soul, and before the historian tells us of the change upon her conduct, he is careful to record that the Spirit of God had been given.

In the case of the jailor, the evidence of a change of heart is even more apparent. But a few hours before, he had, with unnecessary rigour, carried into effect the instructions of the magistrates. He is now seen washing the stripes, and ministering to the comfort, of disciples. But a few minutes before, he was filled with despair, and in the act of laying violent hands upon himself. Now he rejoices, believing in God. It needs but one link to connect the two states, and shew that there is reason for believing that the one followed the other, and both were realized in the experience of the same individual. And if



the baptism of which the historian speaks be the baptism of the Spirit, that link is supplied. For in the interval, the crisis of the man's history had occurred. He had been turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." A change had been wrought upon his nature, a new heart had been given him, the heart of stone taken away, and a heart of flesh put in its place. This accounts for the amazing difference between his conduct before and at the time of the earthquake, and his conduct almost immediately after. He had experienced the truth of the saying, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. That despair should give place to joy, that the man who was about to plunge the steel into his own breast should now be found doing good as he has opportunity, especially unto them that were of the household of faith—this is exactly the change we might expect in one born of the Spirit; and to predicate of him that he had become the subject of the new birth, is to say all that is necessary to account for this change.

Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, having noticed the gift of the Spirit, immediately adds, "But as touching *brotherly love*, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another," 1 Thes. iv. 9. Peter, in the course of his first epistle, says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit *unto unfeigned love of the brethren*, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." Where the Spirit had been imparted, brotherly love was an inseparable consequence, so that an apostle considered an exhortation to this duty as next thing to superfluous. Where the heart had been purified in obeying the truth through the Spirit, it was unto unfeigned love of the brethren. That those, therefore, who have been known hitherto only as the purple-seller of Thyatira, and the coarse and brutal executioner of tyrannical orders, should be now described "distributing to the necessity of saints," identifying themselves with the persecuted followers of

Jesus, manifesting in this simple but practical manner their "love of the brethren," is what we might have expected, if by the statement that they were baptized, we are to understand *with the Spirit*.

### VIII.

"Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."—ACTS xviii. 8.

That Crispus and some others at Corinth were baptized with water, will appear to be likely when we come to the first chapter of Paul's first epistle to this Church. But that the baptism of the text is water-baptism by no means follows from this. The spiritual interpretation quite accords with the context. Christ had said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized. That it is a saving, that is a spiritual, baptism which is here spoken of, is not unlikely. The Lord spake to Paul by a vision, telling him not to fear, and adding, "I have much people in this city," ver. 10. Although, therefore, the apostle met with opposition, there was much people here to be saved. It is in keeping with this statement that among those who heard, there should be even at this period many who believed and were baptized (with the Spirit), to the saving of the soul.

### IX.

"[Apollos] spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."—ACTS xviii. 25.

"It came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and, finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus."—ACTS xix. 1-5.

The meaning of this latter passage has been much disputed. Perhaps the most common view is that it records

the re-baptizing of these twelve men—that they had been first baptized by John, and that now they received another baptism, also with water, but differing from the first in this particular, that the name of Jesus was now employed. But it appears a fatal objection to this view, that here it is expressly stated that John called the thoughts of those he baptized to Jesus himself, “saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus,” so that, as far as water-baptism can be, his seemed to be, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

To avoid the difficulties consequent upon the admission of a re-baptizing, various expedients have been adopted. Some have even gone so far as to hold that these men had not received John’s baptism in the proper sense of the words, that they had not been baptized by John himself, but by some obscure, ill-informed followers of his, who, overlooking the true meaning of his words, exalted him to that place which should have been held by Messiah. But this is hardly consistent with the statement that they had been baptized “unto John’s baptism.” Whether the rite were administered by the Baptist himself, or by another, this statement implies that it was substantially the same as that which John administered.

Others, again, take the words of the fifth verse as part, not of the narrative of Luke, but of the address of Paul, in continuation of what he says in the fourth verse, and consider the meaning to be—John directed the thoughts of the people to Jesus who was to come, and they hearing, ἀκούσαντες, they who heard or attended to his words, were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. John’s baptism was to them to all intents and purposes Christian baptism. This interpretation seems forced, and is unquestionably adopted merely to avoid the difficulties of the others.

Preferable to either of these is the view of Calvin already referred to. After stating his conviction “that the baptism they had received was the true baptism of John, and the very same with the baptism of Christ,” he adds, “but I deny that they were baptized again (with water). What is the meaning of these words, ‘they were

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus'? Some explain it to be that they were only instructed by Paul in the pure doctrine; but I prefer understanding it in a more simple manner, of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that is, of the visible graces of the Spirit, given by imposition of hands. It is not uncommon in the Scripture to designate those graces by the appellation of baptism."—(Calvin's *Institutes*, Book IV., chap. xv., sec. 18, Allen's translation. See also Calvin's commentary upon the passage.) Upon this view I would suggest the following modifications. 1. Instead of regarding John's baptism which these men had received as the same as Christian baptism, I believe them to have differed in that the one was baptism with water, the other baptism with the Spirit; and, 2. Instead of regarding the baptism of the fifth verse as pointing only to the visible graces of the Spirit, I take it as pointing generally to the whole influence of the Spirit on the soul. The objection to this view that it is *afterwards* said that "when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them," Calvin removes, as we have seen (page 93), on the principle that first the subject is introduced in a general way, and then that the latter clause is added to explain the kind of baptism in the former.

It is striking that the advocates of water-baptism should have taken such various ways of explaining this passage, and that some should have been led, in this instance, to adopt that interpretation which favours the spiritual rendering. It is proof that while the rite is adduced as one great matter on which the Church generally is united, the boasted unity goes no further than the acknowledgment of a rite, and that there is no common principle on which it is defended. The views taken of it by different parties who practise it must be sadly at variance, when they lead to such conflicting interpretations.

Before leaving this passage, it may be well to compare with it the closing verses of the preceding chapter. These tell us of a certain Jew named Apollos, who, while he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, did so "knowing only the baptism of John." In this particular

he was in the same position as the twelve disciples at Ephesus. They had been baptized unto John's baptism. They had not so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost. But there is a difference in their treatment. To Apollos the way of God is expounded more perfectly. Of the twelve this important addition is recorded :—" They were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them." How is this to be accounted for? It may be said that to apostles was reserved the work of imparting the Spirit in greatest measure, and that as Apollos was here instructed, not by an apostle, but by disciples, the Spirit was not communicated. But it will not be said that to apostles alone was reserved the work of baptizing; nay, the advocates of water-baptism are wont to allege that this work they in a measure handed over to others, and adduce in favour of this the fact that Peter *commanded* Cornelius and the others to be baptized, Acts x. 48; and that Paul baptized few of the Corinthians himself, 1 Cor. i. 14-16. How then are we to account for the fact, not only that there is not a word about the giving of the Spirit in the case of Apollos, but that there is not a word about baptism? If there was a water-baptism at all, should we not have expected that it would be practised in the case in which an apostle does not appear, as well as that in which he does?

The difference between the two cases has been noticed by Olshausen, and he is led, as the most suitable supposition that he can make, to believe, " That as Aquila not being an apostle could not impart to him the Holy Ghost, Apollos was really baptized in the name of Christ in Ephesus, by Aquila, but first received the Holy Ghost through means of Paul in Corinth." To this supposition we may start the objection that if Aquila, unable to impart the Spirit, had administered its sign, we should have expected Luke to have noticed the fact. There is no mention, in this case, either of baptism or of the gift of the Spirit. It is not sufficient for the supposition that Aquila baptized, but did not impart the Spirit, to say that

the former was in his power, and the latter was not. In the case of the disciples at Ephesus, it is recorded that they were baptized, and it is recorded that they received the Spirit. If we are entitled to assume that Aquila baptized, while the historian is silent on the subject, we are equally entitled to assume that he communicated the Spirit. And in this way we might no doubt dispose of the difference in the two cases, by affirming that it is not a difference in fact, but that the one is more fully recorded than the other.

But this, after all, would not *explain* matters. It may be a very good hypothesis that the silence of Luke in the one case, does not indicate the absence of facts such as are recorded in the other. But it does not account for his silence. A proper explanation should either account for a real difference in fact, or, assuming the facts to be the same, should account for a difference in the narrative. I venture to suggest the following :—Paul spake the word to the disciples. His words were accompanied by demonstration of the Spirit and by power, and accordingly it is said of these men, “They were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.” Aquila and Priscilla expounded to Apollos the way of God more perfectly than he yet knew it, but without the same full demonstration of the Spirit following. That they were sincere, is admitted. That they were more fully acquainted with the nature of the new dispensation than he was, is readily granted. But that their words were not accompanied by the same power as those of the great apostle of the Gentiles, the language of Luke, if it does not directly teach, seems indirectly to imply.

And that this should have been the case, need not surprise us. That when Peter, with the eleven, under the immediate influence of God’s Spirit, spake the word to the multitudes at Pentecost; when Peter, sent by God, preached Christ to Cornelius; when Paul, called by a vision into Macedonia, spake to the women by the water’s side at Philippi, and again to the jailor; when at Ephesus he spake to the twelve disciples,—that in each of these

cases the words of the speaker or speakers should have been followed by the demonstration of the Spirit, is not inconsistent with the supposition that when Aquila and Priscilla expounded unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly, there should have been wanting the same full demonstration, and that some time should have elapsed before Apollos was filled with the Spirit. It is possible to conceive, that when apostles, in the above instances, spake the word, the seal of God should have been immediately set to their teaching in the gift of the Spirit; but that when it was merely a disciple, time should have been allowed for the truth silently to work its way on the heart, and to mould and leaven it in the likeness of Christ.

But to adopt this view is to adopt the spiritual interpretation of the expression, *baptize into the name*, to regard its use in the nineteenth, its absence in the eighteenth chapter, as resolvable into the fact that in the one case spiritual baptism was, while in the other, most likely, it was not administered.

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## CHAPTER V.

### EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES IN THE EPISTLES, IN WHICH THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM IS MENTIONED.

LEAVING the historical books of the New Testament, let us next consider in what aspect the subject is viewed in the Epistles. In these, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They are to be regarded, therefore, as expressing, not the private opinions of Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, but the mind of the Spirit. In them an apostle does not appear swayed by the feelings of the moment, as Peter seemed to be when he dissembled at Antioch, or Paul when he took the vow of the Nazarite, or circumcised Timothy *because of the Jews*. They are to be viewed as in these writings giving forth the high philosophy of religion, as suited to all times,

and adapted to all circumstances. If they speak of baptism as a rite, binding upon every Christian, we must have been mistaken in the interpretation put upon passages of the Gospels and Acts. If, on the other hand, their words harmonize with the views previously deduced from the historical books—if they speak of baptism, not as a rite, but as a doctrine, such statements must more than outweigh any inferential reasonings based upon the fact that in a few instances they themselves practised baptism with water. From the record of their acts, compared with the terms of their commission, we do not gather that baptism with water is a Christian ordinance. When they speak under the influence of that Spirit which was to lead them into all truth, what is the character of their own testimony? To obtain an answer to this question let us turn to their writings, and examine those passages in which the subject is mentioned.

## I.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”  
—ROM. vi. 3, 4.

The work of the spiritual expositor has been done to his hands, in this and some other passages of the epistles, by those who hold by the obligation of water-baptism. M'Crie, speaking of this text, says, “It must be very plain to all unprejudiced minds, that the apostle here speaks of the *spiritual* meaning and effect of baptism, viz., regeneration. He does not include all who may have received the outward rite of baptism; he speaks only of those who had been *baptized into Christ Jesus*—i. e., real converts implanted in Christ; and the meaning is still more evident if the words are read, as they should be, in the *present time*, ‘Know ye not that as many of us as *are* baptized into Jesus Christ, *are* baptized into His death?’ And what is it to be ‘baptized into the death’ or ‘likeness of the death of Christ’? Surely nothing less than being assimilated or conformed to Christ in His death and resur-



rection—in other words, dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness. . . . The apostle says this is only true of those who have been *baptized into Christ*—i. e., savingly united unto Him. . . . What Paul really says is, that truly regenerated men are conformed to the Lord Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, being viewed as one in Him, and partaking of all His benefits. . . . What he wishes to inculcate, and what he would have you all to ascertain, is, not whether you have been outwardly baptized, either by water poured on you, or by being dipped in water, but whether you have been ‘baptized into Jesus Christ.’ If so, then he will tell you that you have died with Him, been buried with Him, and risen again to newness of life. ‘For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death’ (not in outward or symbolical likeness, but in real conformity to His death), ‘we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.’”—(*Lectures on Baptism*, page 38.)

Beecher expends upwards of thirty pages of his work on *Baptism, its Import and Modes*, on this passage and Col. ii. 12. One of his postulates is, that “*As the baptism is, so is the burial*,” and the position he labours to maintain is, that “The baptism, burial, resurrection, &c., are all internal, and the passage does not refer to the external rite at all, nor derive any of its language from it; but the language would have been just as it is if the rite had been administered by sprinkling alone, or even if there had been no external rite.”—(Page 86.) In order the better to wrest it from the advocates of immersion, he adopts this course, and as he cannot fairly claim it in support of his own mode of baptism, politely asks his opponent to withdraw the witness entirely, saying, “Let it be neither mine nor thine.” That he has made good his point that a spiritual and not a ritual baptism is intended, I firmly believe. But that he has thereby improved his own position is by no means apparent. To overthrow immersion is not to lay a solid foundation for sprinkling. To shew that one or more passages have no reference to the rite at all, is to diminish by so many the Scripture testimonies in its

favour. Even on the point of immersion, it is not clear that he has gained. His opponent may still say—You admit the rite. You allow that this passage, if it did speak on the subject, would speak in favour of my mode, and not of yours. You agree with the apostle that the baptism of the Spirit is a burial. But if this be so, will not an outward baptism, having a close resemblance to a burial, be a more significant emblem of the inner than one which makes no pretensions to such a resemblance at all?

But if we discard the rite, we may safely adopt the reasoning of Beecher, and contend for the spiritual meaning of baptism in this place. Neither immersion nor sprinkling is without its significance. The one seems to say,—The baptism of the Spirit is a *burial* into death. It is a submerging of the old man, an emerging of the new. The other reminds us that the Spirit is God's *gift*, that it proceeds from the Father, and *comes down* from above. But we adopt neither, for this simple reason, that the time has arrived when the Sun has arisen, and the shadows flee away. The substance has been given. The antitype has appeared. Jesus has assumed the office of spiritual baptizer. He has begun to "sprinkle many nations." He has made provision whereby His disciples may die to sin, and rise to newness of life, whereby they may be "filled with the Spirit," "put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is renewed in knowledge, created in righteousness and true holiness," Col. iii. 9, and Eph. iv. 22.

## II.

"Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized into mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."—1 COR. i. 13-17.

That water-baptism is referred to in this place, and had been administered in some instances by the apostle

Paul, need not be disputed. He speaks of the baptism of individuals and of households, as of acts completed at once. He refers to particular instances. He thanks God that the instances in which he had administered this baptism were no more. This he would not have done had he been speaking of spiritual baptisms, for the more that he converted, the greater doubtless would have been his joy. Granting then that Paul had administered water-baptism in the cases which he specifies, the question to be considered is,—How does this affect the interpretation put upon Matt. xxviii. 19? Does it prove that the Saviour there enjoined water-baptism? Does it shew that Paul viewed the language of Jesus in this light, and that the inspired comment upon it is—Baptizing with water, and not—Baptizing with the Spirit? That it does not, rather appears from what is added, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.” The passage, Matt. xxviii. 19, is generally looked upon as the apostolic commission; and though Paul was not among the number to whom the words were originally addressed, he must be viewed as receiving the same instructions with the others. What was enjoined on them was equally his work. But in some sense or other they were enjoined to baptize. And yet Paul says he was sent not to baptize (with water). Plainly the sense in which they were enjoined to baptize was not with water, but, as before shewn, with the Spirit.

This explanation will not be received by many. I am aware of the common interpretation of the words, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel,” making them equivalent to—Christ sent me *not so much* to baptize as to preach,—meaning that preaching was the principal work, but by no means implying that baptism was excluded. But if it be granted that the baptism here is the same as that enjoined in the commission, it is difficult to perceive why Paul should appear so concerned to refrain from doing what Christ had actually commanded. To say that the work of preaching was more important than the work of baptizing, does not fully meet this difficulty. It

might be a sufficient reason why he should have been more anxious to obtain opportunities for preaching, than to obtain subjects for baptism. But it will not justify the apostle in giving thanks that he had in many or in most instances refrained from baptizing, if in conjunction with the command to preach, he had also received the command to baptize.

Accordingly, the advocates of water-baptism have sought to set forth reasons for the different treatment which the two commands received at the hands of the apostle. It is said, for instance, that one reason why Paul and others of the apostles refrained from baptizing, and confided it to the hands of others, may have been that to engage in this work was to pave the way for the formation of parties calling themselves by the names of these distinguished leaders, and thus to introduce division and strife into the Christian Church. It is said that to baptize with water, ordinarily, would have interfered with the higher work of the apostles, inasmuch as their frequent journeys from place to place prevented them from giving the previous course of instruction supposed to be required for the catechumens, and did not leave time for frequent immersions.

These are certainly excellent reasons why the apostles should have refrained from engaging in this work, provided always they had received no command on the subject. But they come with a very bad grace from those who are in the habit of quoting Matt. xxviii. 19 as a warrant for the perpetual obligation of water-baptism. In this passage the work of making disciples, of baptizing, and of teaching, is committed to the same hands. And hence it is often argued, that baptism is to be administered by none but by ordained ministers of the Gospel, that the offices of preaching and baptizing are not to be disjoined. Whatever may be said of this, certain it is that the same parties were by Jesus commanded to preach and to baptize. Those who hold that the command was to administer water-baptism, and yet argue that Paul acted wisely in not baptizing, are therefore driven to the somewhat

irreverent conclusion that Paul was wiser than Jesus, that the command of Messiah was impracticable, that the apostle acted wisely in putting asunder what Jesus had joined, and, while he retained the work of preaching, handing over that of baptism to other and inferior hands.

But we cannot think so meanly of the wisdom of Jesus. His parting commission cannot be viewed as enjoining actions which are incompatible in their nature, and incapable of being rightly performed by the same individuals. Whatever baptism He enjoined must be regarded as the proper work of those who were to preach, and least of all can it be viewed as unfitting when dispensed by apostles. The words of Paul must be taken in their plain meaning, that he was sent not to baptize, not to administer that baptism to which he had just referred, baptism with water. He must be regarded as refraining from its administration, not because he had found the execution of Christ's command impracticable, but because the command of Christ, rightly considered, did not enjoin water-baptism at all. And thus we are led to the very same conclusion which was arrived at from other considerations, that the command of Christ is to be interpreted of the baptism of the Spirit, and not of the washing with water.

This conclusion is further confirmed by the verses which follow, in which the apostle sets forth the superiority of the Gospel to what was most valued either by Jewish doctors or Gentile sages. He adduces two leading errors with regard to divine revelation, the one prevalent among Jews, the other among Gentiles, and says, in opposition to both, Christ crucified is set forth, and he, Paul, is sent out with a commission to yield to neither one nor other, but to preach that, the exhibition of which will more completely accomplish the purpose each looks for, from the extension of his own error. He is neither to baptize nor to use wisdom of words. To do the one would be pleasing to the Jew; to do the other would suit the taste of the Greek. But in this respect Paul is not to become a Jew to the Jew, nor a Greek to the Greek. He is to persist

in preaching Christ, although in doing so he should put in the way of the one what appears a stumbling-block, and before the other what he accounts utter foolishness. He is to persevere, knowing that in the end, to those who are called, this mode of procedure will be found to effect greater things than either the sign desired by the Jew, or the wisdom coveted by the Greek. To bring out the meaning more clearly, I shall set down in parallel columns those parts of the passage which relate severally to the error of the Jew, and of the Greek, placing in the middle the connecting passages, which must be read with each column to make the sense complete.

not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:	Christ sent me	[to preach] not with wisdom of words,
	lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For	
the Jews require a sign,	but we preach Christ crucified,	(and) the Greeks seek after wisdom:
unto the Jews a stumbling-block,		(and) unto the Greeks foolishness;

	but unto them which are called,	
(both) Jews	Christ	(and) Greeks,
the power of God,	Because	(and) the wisdom of God.
(and) the weakness of God is stronger than men.	For ye see your call- ing, brethren, how that	the foolishness of God is wiser than men;
not many mighty,	not many noble, are called: but	not many wise men after the flesh,
(and) God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;	God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;	
	and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.	

Here be it observed, that the clauses put into the right hand column make, with the intermediate ones (omitting only one or two connecting words put in brackets), a consistent and harmonious whole, bearing upon the error of the Greeks in seeking for earthly wisdom in the Gospel message. But the clauses thrown into the left hand column are an exact counterpart of those in the right hand, and ought therefore to form, with the intermediate ones, likewise, a consistent and harmonious whole, bearing upon the error of the Jews in looking for signs in the Gospel message. They read as follows,—“Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel, that the cross of Christ might not be made of none effect. For the preaching of the Gospel, &c. For the Jews require a sign, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a

stumbling-block, but unto them which are called (even) Jews, Christ the power of God, because the weakness of God is stronger than men," &c. &c. But if this be the true connection, then the reason why water-baptism was not practised by the apostle comes out to be this, that it partook of the nature of those signs required by the Jews, but which were not to be granted, because contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. His argument is that he refrained from baptizing, not because this was a subordinate office to preaching, and he might leave the lesser in order, more fully to discharge the greater, but because it was a *Jewish sign*, by the practice of which the cross of Christ might be robbed of its glory. His words intimate that to mix up the Gospel with human philosophy was sinful, because this was a departure from the simplicity of Christ; and that, to bring into the domain of the Gospel such a sign as water-baptism, would also be sinful, because this would be to introduce an element not in unison with its spiritual character.

It may be observed that in these remarks I have departed from the ordinary interpretation of verse 22, so far as the word *sign* is concerned. The passage, I believe, is generally understood to mean,—The Jews require *miracles*,—in conformity with the words of Jesus, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe;" whereas I have taken it as referring to ritual or ceremonial signs, and more particularly to that of baptism. That the latter, and not the former, is the true meaning of the word *sign* in this passage, might be argued from the following considerations:—

1. It is sanctioned by previous usage. The Septuagint translation is that version by which the Old Testament was best known to those whose language was Greek, and in it the word *σημεῖον* occurs several times, in the sense which I am here giving it. Circumcision is called a *σημεῖον*,—"Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a *token* of the covenant, ἔσται εἰς σημεῖον διαθήκης, betwixt me and you," Gen. xvii. 11. The same is true of the passover, with the feast of unleavened



bread immediately following, "It shall be for *a sign* unto thee, ἔσται σοι σημεῖον, upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes." "It shall be for *a token*, ἔσται εἰς σημεῖον, upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes," Ex. xiii. 9, 16. The same holds of the Sabbath. "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is *a sign*, σημεῖον ἔστι, between me and you throughout your generations." "It is a sign, σημεῖον ἔστι, betwixt me and the children of Israel for ever." Ex. xxxi. 13, 17. See also Ezek. xx. 12, 20. In none of these passages can the word be translated *miracle*. In some of them it is rendered *token* in our version. In all of them it points to something *ritual or ceremonial*, which was an emblem, a shadow or type of spiritual blessings. That in each case the sense of the Hebrew has been correctly given by the Septuagint, may be inferred from the manner in which these subjects are spoken of in the New Testament. In one case the same word is employed, and our apostle tells us, "Abraham received *the sign*, σημεῖον, of circumcision," Rom. iv. 11. In a second a corresponding word is used, when we are told of the Sabbaths that they "are *a shadow*, σκιά, of things to come," Col. ii. 17. In the third the sign is interpreted, the New Testament equivalent is given, when we read, "*Christ our passover* is sacrificed for us: therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with *the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*," 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. So then to regard this word σημεῖον as pointing to a rite which was an emblem of something spiritual, is to attach to it no new signification, but one as old at least as the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch. This use of the word is sanctioned by the apostle, and if we read it so here, we read it consistently with what he has written elsewhere.

To this I might add, that not only the Greek word σημεῖον, but its English representative, *sign*, bears this meaning. One section of the Church gives this as the definition of a sacrament, "an outward and visible *sign*

of an inward and spiritual grace." Another describes baptism as "a *sign* and seal of the covenant of grace." Those who practise immersion, and those who practise sprinkling, agree in calling the rite *a sign*.

If in the passage under consideration, we regard the word *sign* as pointing to the *rite*, the statement will remain as true as in the days of the apostle. Men's love of miracles is not stronger than their *craving for rites*. One of the most inveterate arguments against the view I have taken throughout of baptism, is based upon a supposed *necessity* for rites. Those who sit in Moses' seat are found in this day giving forth the statement, "Mankind are *not formed to live without ceremony and form*: the 'inward spiritual grace' is very apt to be lost without the '*external visible sign*.'" See above, page 46. Has this fact no bearing on the assertion of Paul, *The Jews require a sign*?

2. This meaning is more in keeping with the context. Paul has spoken of water-baptism; indeed, this was the very thing which led to the introduction of the whole passage before us. But nothing has been said of miracles. In the corresponding clause of the parallel column, that after which the Greeks are said to seek, is what has been mentioned above as one of the things which the apostle had no commission to hold forth—*wisdom*. How natural the construction if in this clause that which the Jews are said to require is named as the other thing he was to withhold—*the sign of baptism*! His language in the one case is—I am not to employ wisdom. The Greeks seek it, but I am not to gratify them, but to preach Christ in simplicity. To make the parallel complete, we must read the other member—I am not to use the sign of baptism. The Jews require such a sign, but I am not to gratify them, but to preach Christ with singleness of aim.

3. The Jews had received signs in the sense of miracles; but Paul seems here to speak of something which was denied them. Jesus was eminently "a man approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him," Acts ii. 22. And, after the descent of the Spirit, after the beginning of the new economy, "by the

hands of the apostle, were many signs and wonders wrought among the people," Acts v. 12. In this respect the Jews had signs to their heart's content. It was of the forerunner that they said, "John did no miracle," but of Messiah they were constrained to say, "This man doeth many miracles." In this respect Christianity was not behind Judaism. Both were introduced by the working of great and mighty wonders and miracles. If there had been nothing else to constitute a difference, the teaching of Jesus would not have met with the opposition it encountered. The people, glorying in following a wonder-worker, would gladly have taken Him, as they once proposed to do, and made Him a king.

But there was a difference, and it consisted in this, that the old economy possessed many signs, in the sense of *rites*, which were wanting in the new. And this was the stumbling-block to the Jew. He had been accustomed to believe in consecrated places. But Jesus declared that His religion was wholly independent of local associations, and that neither in Jerusalem, nor on Mount Gerizim, was God to be specially worshipped, but that He was to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, John iv. 23, 24. The Jew had been used to ceremonial distinctions of meats, and drinks, and days. But an apostle could teach, in the dispensation of the Spirit, "Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse." "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ," 1 Cor. viii. 8; Col. ii. 16, 17. The Jew had been taught to approach God through the medium of a carnal priesthood. But in Christ the priesthood was changed. The high-priest came not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, while, in place of the descendants of Levi, came the royal priesthood of believers. Once more, the Jew had been trained to the offering of sacrifices, and the observance of a burdensome, though typical, ritual, having a shadow of

good things to come, but not the very image of the things, being rich in signs of holiness, but powerless to make the comers thereunto perfect. The Christian was required with open face to behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord. It is in the nature of things that the Jews should require signs such as they had been accustomed to, and that they should find a difficulty in conceiving of the worship of God apart from these signs.

And this is not merely theory. It is confirmed by history. For we find that very early in the history of the Church, Jewish rites were mixed up with Christian realities. In the fifteenth chapter of Acts we read that "certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Peter, as we have seen, was at one time disposed to compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews, to Judaize, or adopt Jewish rites and practices, Gal. ii. 14. Other Jews dissembled with him, and Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. The Galatian Church, led away by Judaizing teachers, was in danger, and Paul sharply reproves them, and speaks of their conduct as a turning again to weak and beggarly elements, Gal. iv. 9, &c. The Colossians had well-nigh split upon the same rock, and Paul writes to them, "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Col. ii. 20, 22. But in the epistle to the Hebrews the distinction between the law and the Gospel is most strongly insisted on, and the broad announcement is made, "There is verily a *disannulling* of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof," Heb. vii. 18. "He taketh away the one that He may establish the other." Here then we find that Jewish rites were early practised when they should have been abstained from, that Jewish teachers were especially prone to insist upon their observance, and that to Jewish converts in particular, instructions are given as to their true character, and they are

informed that, now their end has been served, they are disannulled or abrogated. Can we be at any loss, after this, in understanding what the apostle meant when he said, "The Jews require a sign"? They had been accustomed to ritual signs. They missed these in the religion of Jesus. They thought the worship of Christians bald and tame, and would fain set it off by the introduction of some of the old leaven. But are they indulged in their fancies? No. And that though they should be offended and stumble at the word. "We preach Christ, to the Jews a stumbling-block."

4. The sign which Christ did give to the Jews was a historical type. "When certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee, He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," Matt. xii. 38-40; also, xvi. 1-4. "As Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall the Son of man be to this generation," Luke xi. 30. To many it may appear that the answer of the Saviour, in this place, is directly opposed to the view of signs I have taken. They will be disposed to say that here, at least, the word *sign* must stand for miracle, and nothing else; that the meaning of the Saviour is,—As the miraculous appearance of Jonas, after being three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, was an evidence of his divine mission, so my resurrection, after I have been three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, will be the evidence of my divine commission, and that I speak not of myself, but the words which I hear from the Father. I believe, however, that the language of the Saviour, properly considered, contains a deeper thought than this.

It is particularly to be remarked, that the sign of Jonas given to the Ninevites is his three days' entombment in the belly of the fish; while the similar sign to be given to

the Jews is the three days' entombment of Messiah in the heart of the earth. The comparison is drawn, not between miracle and miracle—between the signal deliverance effected for Jonah and the divinely-wrought resurrection of Jesus—but between the shutting up for the same period of the prophet in his tomb and the Saviour in His tomb. No doubt the escape and re-appearance of Jonah is analogous to the resurrection of Jesus; but it is not the miracle which constitutes the sign in either case. The comparison is placed between the purely natural—the fact of a drowning man being swallowed by a large fish, and that of a dead man being buried in a grave. And, therefore, although we may follow out the comparison beyond what is expressly indicated in the text, that in which each is a sign must lie in something other than the miracle.

How, then, let us ask, was Jonah a sign to the Ninevites? He had been disobedient to the heavenly vision, and fled from the presence of the Lord. He had met with punishment, being exposed to a storm, thrown overboard, and shut up for three days and nights within the belly of a fish. In his extremity he cried to God, and God heard him, and delivered him out of all his distresses; so that, on being directed a second time to go to Nineveh, he was able to fulfil his commission. His history was to the Ninevites an emblem of God's method of procedure with sinners—a figure of the manner in which he would deal with themselves. The judgment which came upon him when he fled from the presence of the Lord was the best illustration which could be given of the futility of attempting to escape the just judgment of God, and Jonah, speaking from the depths of his own experience, could thus utter, with the greater vehemence, the fearful denunciation, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The wonderful deliverance effected for him, when he cried, by reason of his affliction, unto the Lord, was the best proof to them that they might still entertain a gleam of hope, and that a ray of mercy might still reach them in their distress; while the conduct of Jonah in his calamity was to the Ninevites the pattern by which theirs

should be framed :—"I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD." "I said, I am cast off out of thy sight ; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD : and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving ; I will pay that which I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD," Jonah ii. 2, 4, 7, 8, 9. The sign was not lost upon the men of Nineveh, for "they repented at the preaching of Jonas." A general fast was proclaimed. Publication was made that it should be rigidly kept over the length and breadth of the land, and the very beasts were to share in the general mourning. And as the sign was verified in their repentance, so was it also in their deliverance, and they found, to their joy, that salvation was of the LORD. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way ; and God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them ; and He did it not," Jonah iii. 10.

Now, says the Saviour, "as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall the Son of man be to this generation." "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." In other words,—As the one set of facts was the model after which the conduct of the Ninevites was to frame itself, so the other set of facts is the model upon which the conduct of the men of this generation should be framed : as the preaching of Jonas, escaped from the belly of the fish, led to repentance and a turning to God, so the teaching of Jesus, soon to be crucified for sin, buried, and raised from the dead, and the preaching of His disciples, after this resurrection, should lead to repentance and conversion.

I esteem it no mean confirmation of this view, that what is thus inferred from internal evidence to be the meaning of the sign, does in reality form the sum of that teaching which was based by the apostles on the death and resurrection of Jesus—"Ye killed the Prince of life,

whom God hath raised from the dead: . . . repent ye, therefore, and be converted," Acts ii. 15, 19. "As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 4-6, 11, &c. "Ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," Col. ii. 12; iii. 1-3. But if this be so, then the sign of Jonas given to the Jews, does not lie so much in the fact of a miraculous resurrection, as rather in the fact of a death, burial, and resurrection, emblematic of the death to sin of the believer, and his resurrection to newness of life,—in other words, the sign of Jonas was a type of spiritual matters. And if so, then it is to give no new meaning to the word sign, to say that it points to a type, and not to a miracle, as I have done in the passage under consideration.

It is, to say the least, a curious coincidence, that the sign of Jonas and the sign of baptism point to the same things, a death to sin, a resurrection to newness of life. The two passages, Rom. vi. 3, 4, and Col. ii. 12, are often advanced as shewing that in water-baptism, the subject undergoes a death and burial, similar to those of Jesus Christ, which constitute the sign of Jonas given to the Jews. I leave it for those who use this argument, to reconcile their practice with the words of the Saviour, and, seeing that Jesus has said no sign should be given but that of Jonas, to explain by what authority this baptism of John, a figure of the same truths, has



been raised to the rank of a Christian ordinance, and whether, in this point of view, it be from heaven or of men.

### III.

"Our fathers . . . were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."—1 COR. X. 1, 2.

What is the general scope of the passage from which these words are taken? Whitby says that it is "to shew that they (the congregation of Israel) had the like spiritual advantages and privileges with us" (*Commentary on the New Testament*); and Fairbairn, speaking of substantially the same view, says, "This, unquestionably, is the view adopted by the ablest and soundest divines; although there are certain limitations which must be understood. The apostle is evidently drawing a parallel between the case of the Church in the wilderness, and that of the Church under the Gospel, with an especial reference to the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper."—(*Typology*, vol. ii., p. 72.) It is thus considered that the baptism in the cloud and sea answers to water-baptism in the New Testament, and that the rock typically represented Christ, while the flowing forth and drinking of the water had in it the nature of a sacrament.

Upon the passage generally, I remark that—

1. It does not teach the perpetuity of sacraments in the Christian Church. If this had been the aim of the apostle, we should rather have expected him to instance circumcision and the passover, as Old Testament institutions. What he does call attention to was true only of one generation, that, namely, which came out of Egypt with Moses. Of them alone could it be said that they passed through the cloud and the sea, and that they did eat manna in the wilderness, and drank of the water that flowed from the rock, and followed them. The passage through the sea was accomplished at once. The cloud indeed followed them, but it was only in going through the wilderness. The manna was continued for years, but it ceased when they entered into the land of

promise. If then a comparison were to be drawn between these things and New Testament sacraments, nothing could be inferred as to the perpetuity of the latter, but if the comparison were good for anything, it would rather point to their early abolition. The congregation of Israel were all baptized unto Moses, and did eat manna and drink water in the wilderness. On this it might be possible to found an argument to the effect that the disciples who companied with the apostles should observe sacramental ordinances. But till it can be proved that the descendants of this congregation in the wilderness were also baptized in the cloud and in the sea, till it can be made out that the manna continued to fall throughout the whole period of the Jewish economy, the passage will be powerless to shew that two sacraments are perpetually to be observed in the Christian Church. And accordingly Fairbairn, not thoroughly satisfied with "the view adopted by the ablest and soundest divines," takes care to add, "Such language, however, cannot have been meant to imply that the manna and the water directly and properly symbolized Christ, in the same sense in which the bread and wine of the Supper do. For, the gift of the manna and the water had immediate respect to the supply of the people's bodily necessities. For this alone they were directly and ostensibly given; and hence our Lord, speaking of what the manna was, in itself, depreciates its value in respect to men's higher natures, and declares to the Jews, it was not the true bread of heaven, as was evident alone from the fact, that the life it was sent more immediately to nourish actually perished in the wilderness. Not, therefore, directly and purposely, but only in a remote, concealed, typical sense, could the apostle intend his expressions of spiritual food and drink to be understood." —(*Typology*, vol. ii., page 73.)

But the intention of the apostle here is obviously not to make comparison in point of privilege between the Old and the New Testament Church, but between two classes of persons in the congregation of Israel. When he says, they "were all baptized, and did all eat the same spiritual

meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink," his meaning is not—they did all partake of the same privileges *with us*, but—they were all alike, *among themselves*, in point of privilege. The baptism which one received, all received; the manna and water which were supplied for one, were supplied for all. Whatever typical reference these things possessed, it was open to one as well as another to investigate, and direct their thoughts from the type to the antitype; for what one had, all had. Or, as Locke expresses it, they "*all to a man* ate the very same spiritual food, and *all to a man* drank the very same spiritual drink." This is obvious from what follows, "With many of them God was not well pleased." In point of privilege they were alike, but in point of character they were different, as is apparent from God's displeasure with many of them. When the apostle, therefore, speaks of all partaking of the same privileges, he means *one partaking as well as another*; he does not mean all or any partaking of the same privileges as disciples in the Christian economy, and therefore no inference can be deduced from his words as to the propriety of sacramental observances now. But,

2. The passage does teach the typical nature of the Old Testament incidents referred to. This is not at once apparent from the common translation. But the word rendered *examples* in the sixth verse, and *ensamples* in the eleventh, is literally *types*, *τύποι*, so that we should read the words of the apostles, "These things were our types, these things happened unto them typically, or as types."

(1.) They were types, having their antitypes in the Christian Church. The apostle, writing to the Corinthians, says, "These things were *our* types." "They happened unto them typically, and they are written for *our* admonition." The passage through the sea, the presence of the cloud, the descent of the manna, the gushing forth of the water, were all typical of Gospel blessings. But the type and the antitype, while possessing a certain amount of similarity, are different in nature. There is a correspondence in details, like that in the parable and its

exposition ; but, as there also, there is a difference, the one having to do with natural, the other with spiritual matters. Thus, Moses, a deliverer from Egyptian bondage, is a type ; Christ, the Saviour from sin, the antitype : Joshua, the leader of the natural Israel, and the conqueror of their foes, a type ; Jesus, the captain of our salvation, the conqueror of death, and Him that had the power of it, the antitype : the blood of bulls and goats, cleansing to the purifying of the flesh, a type ; the blood of Christ (or rather His inexpressible sufferings), cleansing from all sin, the antitype. But if so, nothing can be inferred from the passage under consideration, as to the presence of sacraments in the new economy. While the baptism unto Moses has its antitype in the Gospel, it is not of an outward nature. If it should be proved ever so clearly that this baptism was a washing with water, and that the people were drenched in the dew, and sprinkled with the spray, no argument could be founded thereupon for a Christian baptism, of which dipping or sprinkling was an essential element. The baptism unto Moses may be viewed as a type of the baptism of the Spirit. It cannot be regarded as a type of water-baptism.

(2.) They were more particularly typical of events in the history of the early Church. Paul says to the Corinthians, "These things were *our* types, and they are written for *our* admonition, *upon whom the ends of the world are come*," or the ends of the ages have fallen. Pool, in his commentary, tells us that the Jews were wont to reckon three ages, that *before* the law, that *under* the law, and that under Messiah, or *after* the law. And we recognise the same distinction when we speak of the *Patriarchal*, the *Mosaic*, and the *Christian* dispensations. The apostle speaks of himself and his readers as having reached the last of these. They had belonged to the age of the law, but the boundary had been passed, and upon them the last of the ages had come. And standing thus at the threshold of the new economy, and having had to do both with the old and the new, they were the fitting antitypes of those who had stood at the threshold of the old, those

who had had to do both with it and with a previous one. In other words, the men who left Egypt with Moses, were types of the early Christians. Those had seen the final close of the first period, and the opening of the second. These saw the winding up of the second, and the introduction of the third. Those upon whom the second period had come, to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt, by the hand of a mediator, even Moses, were types of those upon whom the third period came, to deliver them from the bondage of the letter, by the hand of a greater than Moses. The deliverance from Egypt was thus a type of the liberty of the Gospel. The provision made for the people in the wilderness was typical of the nourishment provided for the Church militant.

And this accordingly gives us the key to the dangers of the early Church, and shews us the evils to which they were exposed. Paul, in this chapter, enumerates five instances in which Israel transgressed. They are written for the admonition of the early Church, and should therefore be typical of sins into which it was likely to fall. Let us look at them in succession. The first is that of *lusting*. It is recorded in the eleventh chapter of Numbers. The people longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt. Their complaint in the wilderness was, "There is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." They desired again to partake of "the fish, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the garlick," on which they had been accustomed to feed in the land of Egypt. The second is that of *idolatry*, the sin of making and worshipping the golden calf. The worship of the lower animals, and particularly of the sacred bull, was prevalent in Egypt, so that this sin resolves itself into a reverting to the idolatrous practices of Egypt. The third is that of *fornication* (Num. xxv.), committed with the daughters of Moab. This sin is looked upon by idolaters as comparatively trivial, and according to the accounts of those who have studied the habits and manners of ancient Egypt, it was particularly common in this country. It may therefore be viewed as an adopting of the immoral practices

of Egypt. The fourth is spoken of as a *tempting*, and its punishment was being destroyed of serpents. The reference seems to be to Num. xxi., and the words are, "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." The sin resembles very much the first. It is a reproaching of God for having brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and a despising of that supply which He had provided for their wants in the manna. The fifth is a *murmuring* consequent on the report brought up of the land of promise, by the twelve men who had been sent to spy it out, Num. iv. 2-4. The people lament that they have left Egypt. They put the question, "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" and make the proposal, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

The root, then, of all these sins was this, a hankering after Egypt, and the things of Egypt; valuing more highly the position they had left, than that into which God had brought them. And this shews us the point of the admonition. If Egypt be a type of Judaism, and if the sin of Israel be an overweening estimate of Egypt notwithstanding of its bitter bondage; and if this is recorded for the admonition of those who lived in apostolic times, then the danger of the Church, and the sin into which it was most likely to fall, would lie in this,—an overweening attachment to Judaism, a desire to be under the law, although it had proved to be a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. And this is precisely the sin, as already seen, into which the early Church was most prone to fall. And hence Paul, in writing to the Galatians, warns them against "false brethren unawares brought in," of whom he writes, "who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that

the truth of the Gospel might continue with you," ii. 4, 5. And he admonishes the Galatians, saying, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage," v. 1.

The passage thus furnishes us incidentally with a confirmation of what has been said upon water-baptism, viewing it as a rite of the Jewish economy. It was the most likely thing that an attempt should be made to carry over some of the practices of Judaism to the region of Christianity, just as some of the practices of Egypt had been introduced into the congregation of Israel, even after they had left Egypt. The typical Church had lusted for the flesh-pots of Egypt. The actual Church might be expected to have a hankering after the ceremonies of Judaism. It furnishes an answer also to the argument that water-baptism, because practised by apostles, must have accorded with the mind of Jesus. Of the twelve men sent up, at the commandment of the Lord (Num. xiii.), to spy the land of promise, ten brought back an evil report, saying, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we," verse 31. And their representations led to the proposal, "Let us return into Egypt." Shall we wonder if, of the twelve men selected to unfold the glories of the spiritual economy, some should have magnified the difficulties attending a life of holiness, and contributed to raise the desire again to return to the weak and beggarly elements of Judaism? Aaron, the brother and colleague of Moses, yielded to the representations of the people, made them a golden calf like the Egyptians, and thus brought upon them the great sin of idolatry. It need not stagger us to find that Peter, in accordance with Jewish prejudices, should administer a rite which belonged to the old dispensation. But the cowardice and want of faith of the spies did not make the murmurings of the people any less a sin. And the sanction of apostolic authority will not justify dissatisfaction with spiritual religion, and a desire for antiquated and obsolete rites. The example of Aaron did not save the people from pun-

ishment when guilty of idolatry. The example of Peter will not save the Church from God's displeasure, or avert the consequences of its sin and folly, when found guilty of putting the new wine of Christianity into the old bottles of Judaism.

But, before leaving this passage, let us revert for a little to the expression *baptized unto* (or *into*, εἰς) Moses. This baptism, we say, was typical—typical of a spiritual baptism. But it was itself also a real and effective baptism in a lower sphere. It is observable that, besides the baptism into Christ, or into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, this is the only instance in which any one is said to be baptized *into a person*. When John's baptism is spoken of, the people are never said to be baptized into or unto John. They are baptized "unto John's baptism." When Paul asks, "Were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" it is as a thought not to be entertained—a supposition from which he recoils. But "into Moses," in some sense or other, the people were baptized; and if we can ascertain what that sense is, it will throw some light upon the expression, "baptized into Christ." By many it is taken as an equivalent to *into an acknowledgment of Moses*. That this baptism was accompanied by an acknowledgment of Moses is quite possible, for it is said that "the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses," Ex. xiv. 31. But this acknowledgment must have been of very short duration indeed; for so soon as "the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt, the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness," Ex. xvi. 1, 2. That into which they were baptized was not, therefore, a perpetual acknowledgment of Moses.

But there was something real effected by this baptism. It is said to have been *in the cloud and in the sea*. Before Pharaoh pursued Israel, we read, "The Lord went before them in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night," Ex. xiii. 21. But now "the angel of God,



which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night," Ex. xiv. 19, 20; while, at the stretching forth of the hand of Moses, the sea became dry land, "and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," ver. 21, 22. Thus Israel was shut in on three sides. On either hand was the sea as a wall. Behind them was the cloud. Their path was hedged up, and there was no passage except in front. There was but one course open to them, and in that course Moses led the way. The baptism in the cloud and in the sea was thus an actual *separation* from Egypt and its mighty hosts. The people had been murmuring, "It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians," Ex. xiv. 12. What now took place effected the accomplishment of the words of Moses, when he said, "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever," ver. 13.

The washings under the law, ceremonially viewed, were acts of separation, by which the object was set apart from a common to a solemn use—separated to the service of God. The baptism into Moses was an actual separation from the hosts of Egypt to the guidance of Moses, so that, whatever murmurings they should afterwards be guilty of, this cut them off from Egypt, and they could not choose but follow Moses, no other course being open to them. If this be the nature of the baptism into Moses, it will not be difficult to see what is intended by the baptism into Christ. The baptism into Moses separated the people from the thralldom of Egypt. The baptism into Christ separates from the bondage of sin and of legal worship. The baptism into Moses was an actual enrolment of the congregation under the banner of Moses; so that, from this period, their fortunes were linked together, and became one with

his. The baptism into Christ must be an actual enrolment of disciples under His banner ; so that, from the time it is effected, their interests are linked together, and become one with His. By the baptism into Moses, the people were shut up to his guidance, and followed where he led, whether by the gushing waters or the parched desert. By the baptism into Christ Jesus, His people are shut up to His guidance, and follow where He leads, whether through good report or bad. But the baptism which effects this is not the ritual, but the spiritual. To be baptized into Christ is, therefore, to be baptized with the Spirit.

#### IV.

“By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”—1 Cor. xii. 13.

This passage completely accords with the view of baptism presented in the preceding pages. The advocate for a ritual baptism can derive no sanction for his practice from these words. There is no vestige here of water-baptism. That which is spoken of is not ἐν ὕδατι, with or by water. It is ἐν ἐνὶ Πνεύματι, by one Spirit. I shall, therefore, not pause in seeking to make more plain what appears on the very face of Scripture.

But let it be remarked that this spiritual baptism is a baptism εἰς ἐν σῶμα, *into one body*. The context shews what this body is. In the preceding verse, the apostle says, “As the body is one, so also is Christ,” and, further down, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” The baptism of which he speaks is, therefore, a baptism into the body of Christ, or into Christ. This truth, then, we extract from the passage, that *baptism into Christ is effected by the Spirit*. As much is never said of water. Paul writes to the Corinthians that, by the Spirit, they are baptized into Christ. He nowhere says that, by water, any are baptized into Christ. When, therefore, Paul elsewhere uses the phrase, *baptized into Christ*, may we not infer that he means baptized by the Spirit?

## V.

“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?”—1 COR. XV. 29.

This is generally considered a very difficult passage, and it is one on which the sentiments of expositors have been very much divided. Bengel, as quoted by Alford, says, “Tanta est interpretationum varietas, ut is, qui non dicam varietates ipsas, sed varietatum catalogos colligere velit, *dissertationem* scripturus sit.” “So great is the diversity of interpretation that, whoever would collect, I shall not say these diverse interpretations themselves, but lists of them, must write a *dissertation*.” From this it appears that there is by no means a uniform rendering of the passage, that those who maintain the permanency of water-baptism cannot agree upon any one interpretation, but acknowledge, on all hands, that the passage is fraught with difficulties; and many of them, to give a satisfactory explanation, have recourse to the supposition of practices, the existence of which, when the apostle wrote, is, to say the least, doubtful. I might, therefore, rest content with passing by the passage in silence, and wait till some common ground of explanation is taken up by those who practise the rite, before attempting to establish a conclusion opposed to its use. But I do not believe that this passage was put here as a stumbling-block, to serve no other purpose than merely to divide the sentiments of expositors. I believe that a careful study of the word, apart from prejudice and preconceived opinions, will one day lead to the understanding of the mind of the Spirit on this passage, as well as on others, and that they who seek the guidance of Him who was to lead into all truth will not be left perpetually to grope in the dark. The object which an enlightened expositor should have in examining Scripture ought to be truth, not victory. In this spirit let us approach the subject. If the word of God inculcates water-baptism, by all means let it be retained. If this passage is in its favour, let not its evidence be withheld. I remark generally that—

1. The word "dead" does not necessarily point in this place to the dissolution of soul and body, but may with equal reason be supposed to refer to spiritual death, "dead in sin." This supposition might be supported by these considerations: that, (1.) In other passages (see remarks on Heb. vi. 1-5), the word has a spiritual meaning; while the phrase "resurrection of the dead," is sometimes equivalent to resurrection from dead works to newness of life. (2.) The corresponding expression "born," is also often to be spiritually understood, "born from above," "born of the Spirit," "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Pet. i. 23, "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13. In this chapter the idea seems present to the mind of the apostle, though a somewhat different expression is used, "Of me also, as of one born out of due time," verse 8, literally, an abortion. (3.) Natural death is referred to under a different name in this chapter, "Of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are *fallen asleep*," ver. 6. "Then they also which are *fallen asleep* in Christ, are perished," ver. 18. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them *that slept*," ver. 20. From these considerations I infer that it is no straining of language to regard the phrase "the dead," in verse 29, as pointing to those who are spiritually dead, dead in sins.

2. If this be the true meaning, then the baptism which is spoken of must be spiritual baptism; for, (1.) It is reasonable to suppose that the verse will be of one texture. If the death is spiritual, the baptism should be spiritual too; and, (2.) The spiritual view alone gives a consistent meaning to the language of the apostle. It is only by a most unnatural straining of language, that ritual baptism can in any case be said to be administered "for the dead." Alford translates—"On behalf of the dead,"—and says, "The *only legitimate reference* is, to a practice, not otherwise known to us, not mentioned here with any approval by the apostles, not generally prevalent

(ΟΙ βαπτίζόμενοι), but in use by some, of survivors allowing themselves to be baptized on behalf of (believing?) friends who had died without baptism." Whitby regards the words "for the dead," as equivalent to "for the sake of a dead Jesus." Barnes paraphrases them, as "with reference to the dead, with direct allusion to the condition of the dead and their hopes, with a belief that the dead will rise." The first view is grammatically correct, but the reference which it necessitates is open to the objection that it rests upon a pure hypothesis, and that even if the practice *at one time*, and *to some extent*, existed, the apostle can hardly be supposed to have grounded on it reasonings in an epistle designed for the *universal Church, in all time*. The second view seems to wrest the expression "the dead," τῶν νεκρῶν, which is properly plural; and the third to torture the word ὑπὲρ, *for*, properly *for the sake of*, giving it a meaning which it will hardly bear. But if spiritual baptism be meant, there is no such wrenching of the passage; for some, at least, who had received the Spirit, are, in the truest sense of the words, baptized for the dead, that is to say, they have received spiritual power to be employed *for the dead*, to be employed in the conversion and spiritual edification of those who are dead in sins. One or two passages will be sufficient to bring out this truth. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me," Acts i. 8. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God), *I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh*: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my hand-maidens, *I will pour out* in those days *of my Spirit*; and they shall prophesy," Acts ii. 16-18, compared with verse 41, as the result of the prophesying, "The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." — "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal: . . . To another [are given] the gifts

of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy, &c," 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, 9, 10.

"He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, *for the work of the ministry*, for the edifying of the body of Christ," Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12.

"Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father *the promise of the Holy Ghost*, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear," Acts ii. 31.

The end then, one end at least, for which the Spirit is given, is the conversion of sinners. Believers may not always be aware of it. They may act often as if no such duty devolved upon them, but the fact remains. The work of conversion is committed to their hands. They are Christ's witnesses. The Spirit which He has received He imparts to them, "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The argument of the apostle seems to be to this effect,—What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? If it be true, as some affirm, that the resurrection is past, if the power of the Gospel is exhausted, if the energy which accompanied it is spent, if conversions are never to take place, if there is to be no renewal of Pentecost, what shall they do who are baptized for the dead? If gifts are bestowed upon the Church, can it be without a purpose? If to some are given by the Spirit the gifts of healing, of miracles, of prophecy, of tongues, there is surely an end to be answered in all this. God does not bestow power without giving an opportunity to exercise it, and if there are still men in the Church who can wield the power of the Spirit, it is only reasonable to look for the fruits of the Spirit. To say that these are not to be expected, is greatly to err. The resurrection is not already past, but in the exercise of the same faith, and hope,

and love, the deeds which characterised the outpouring of Pentecost are still to be looked for.

This accords, too, with what follows,—“Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?” What was it that endangered the apostle’s life? Why, the fact that he was *baptized for the dead*. His language seems equivalent to this—Why, while not of the world, should I continue to mix with the world? Why should I suffer myself to be brought into contact with those with whom I have nothing in common? Why should I, by appearing in their company, expose myself to persecution and suffering at their hands? Why, but because I have received the Spirit *for them*, not for myself simply, that, separating myself from the world, I might lead a life of contemplation, and holy meditation, but for others, that I may testify to them the truth as it is in Jesus. Without this, my conduct would be altogether inexplicable. The course I am pursuing would be madness. “If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?” Why should I have braved such danger (either that of an actual conflict in a gladiatorial show, or perhaps rather a contention with men whose character might be fitly described as that of natural brute beasts), if I did not believe that by walking in the Spirit, I might command the attention of some? Far wiser had I been, if I had not this conviction, to say with the epicure, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

When we recollect the language of Paul in the epistle to the Romans—“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness *in the Holy Ghost*, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved,” Rom. ix. 1-3; x. 1;—we can understand how he should be willing to suffer anything, ay, to throw himself as into the lion’s mouth, if by so doing he might gain some. He had received the grace of God, which *bringeth salvation*. He

was willing to spend and be spent, but it was in the firm conviction that there was a resurrection from the dead, that a straightforward course of unbending rectitude, of holy and consistent action, with strong faith in Christ, would assuredly tell upon the hearts of others, that the preaching to the dry bones would be accompanied by the breathing upon the slain, and that they would stand up a living army of God.

But if I am right in the general interpretation of this passage, it is spiritual baptism of which it speaks; and thus it affords an additional confirmation of the view which regards that as Christian baptism.

## VI.

“As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”—GAL. iii. 27.

1. The general argument of the apostle is in favour of the spiritual and against the ritual rendering in this passage. One great object throughout this epistle is to shew that the Gospel preached by Paul is completely independent of ritual observances. The first two chapters may be viewed as introductory to the general argument, and designed more particularly to vindicate the authority of Paul, as derived immediately from the Lord Jesus Christ. But even there the writer does not lose sight of this general object. He adduces the case of Titus, who was acknowledged as a disciple without needing to undergo the rite of circumcision (ii. 3). He refers to another occasion, on which he felt himself constrained to differ from and to reprove Peter for compelling the Gentiles to adopt Jewish practices. Even in these introductory chapters, therefore, the great truth comes out, that justification in no degree flows from obedience to the works of the law, but simply and solely from faith in Christ, ii. 16, &c.

In the third chapter, this is the great central truth. An appeal is made to the Galatians themselves—“Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the



hearing of faith?" In which of these ways did the spiritual influence reach you—through an external ritual, or by the application of truth, preached and heard, to your souls? The question is then asked, "Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by [or, as some render it, do you now end in] the flesh?" As though he had said, Is it reasonable to suppose that what was spiritual in its beginning can be ritual in its completion? What follows goes to shew that it is not reasonable, that God designed all along to justify men, not by the observance of an outward law, but by faith in a Mediator. In answer to the question, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" he says, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Men may differ as to what is meant by the expression law in this chapter. But they will generally admit that the ritual law, at all events, is included. Now that this law was *added* shews that it was temporary. It had not been from the beginning. That it was added "*till* the seed should come," fixes the limit of its duration to the coming of the seed. But the seed is explained (verse 16) to be Christ, and the inference is that, since His coming, since He has "magnified the law and made it honourable," fulfilling all righteousness, and being thus "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," the authority of the law has ceased. But this we are not left to deduce by mere inference. It is distinctly stated, a little further on, by the apostle. "The law," he says, "was our schoolmaster [pedagogue, *παιδαγωγός*, not necessarily the instructor, but perhaps rather the one who leads to the instructor], to bring us unto Christ." "But after that faith [or that dispensation which says, not, Do this and live, but, Believe and be saved] is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster," we are no longer under the law; in other words, the law, with its ritual observances, passes away. In the next chapter, the apostle follows out the same train of reasoning. He reproves the Galatians for turning again to the weak and beggarly elements, for observing days, and months, and times, and

years ; in other words, for practising and trusting in ceremonial observances. In the fifth chapter he exhorts them to stand fast, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage ; and he assures them that the practice of one rite such as circumcision is inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity.

This is enough to make good the assertion, that one great object of the apostle was to shew that the Gospel is independent of ritual observances. But baptism with water is a ritual observance. It is, therefore, a plain inference that the Gospel is independent of baptism with water. And it cannot, without the very strongest of proofs, be supposed that, in the heart of this argument, a passage will be found which, properly interpreted, raises this to the rank of a Christian ordinance. If, notwithstanding the strong language of the apostle, the rite of baptism has a place in the Gospel dispensation, this we should expect to be clearly and explicitly stated. If a passage which, in other circumstances, might be supposed to imply its existence is capable of a spiritual rendering, we are bound by the context, and the whole strain of the epistle, to adopt this rather than the ritual.

2. The language of this verse (iii. 27) strongly resembles that which, in passages already considered, has been seen to point to spiritual baptism. The language of the apostle is "baptized into Christ." It is not necessary upon these words to remark further than to remind the reader of what has been already said upon baptism into an individual, and into the name of an individual. If the reasoning which was held in these cases was good, then the phrase "baptized into Christ," means baptized with the Spirit. On the admission of some who practise the ritual baptism, the expression "baptized into Christ," is equivalent to "real converts implanted in Christ," "savingsly united unto Him." See above, pp. 124, 125.

3. The baptism here spoken of is accompanied by a putting on of Christ, and this can be predicated only of spiritual baptism. It may perhaps be said that to put on

means simply to profess, or to put on a profession of Christianity, and that this is perfectly compatible with a ceremonial baptism. But the connection shews that something more is intended by putting on Christ. The assertion of the 27th verse is assigned as a reason for what is stated before. "Ye are all," says the apostle, "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The reason adduced for this statement is, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have put on Christ." "Ye are children of God," and why? because ye have received the Spirit of adoption, and been made in the likeness of His Son. "Ye are the children of God by faith," and why? because the Spirit of God has applied the things of Christ to your souls, because by one Spirit ye have been baptized into one body, and thus put on Christ. "For ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

But if an external baptism with water cannot be deduced from this passage, not only is it without the shadow of support from this epistle, but its practice is utterly inconsistent with the apostle's reasoning. He shews at great length that rites have no place in the Gospel economy. Water-baptism is a rite. It is therefore of course excluded.

## VII.

"One baptism."—EPH. iv. 5.

The apostle in this chapter is urging to *unity*. His argument is that the Christian Church is one, that it is animated by one Spirit, possessed of one Lord, holding one faith, endowed with one baptism, the creation of one God and Father of all. The oneness of the baptism is put along with the oneness of the Saviour, of faith, of the Godhead, &c. The least that can be inferred is that there is a baptism which is *common to every member of the Church*. This is evidently the baptism of the Spirit. Baptism with water is not one, but manifold, administered sometimes in infancy, sometimes in manhood, sometimes

by sprinkling, sometimes by immersion, sometimes with other ceremonies, sometimes without. It is not a distinctive mark of the Church, many receiving it who are not members of Christ, and some rejecting it who are acknowledged to be Christians. But the baptism of the Spirit is a distinctive mark of the Church, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," while "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 9, 14. The passage therefore refers not to ritual, but to spiritual baptism.

But further, by referring to a spiritual baptism, this passage excludes a ritual. By saying that in the Christian dispensation there is "one baptism," it implies that there is *only one*. When the apostle writes, "There is one body," he teaches the *unity* of the Church. He is in harmony with himself, when he says in another place, "Now are they many members, yet *but one body*." When he writes, "There is one Spirit," he implies that there are not two, but that one and the same Spirit animates each member of the body—"there are diversities of gifts, but *the same Spirit*." When he says there is "*one Lord*, . . . . *one God* and Father of all," his doctrine is the same as when he tells the Corinthians, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is *none other God but one*. . . . . To us there is *but one God*, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and *one Lord*, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." "There are differences of administrations, but *the same Lord*. And there are diversities of operations, but it is *the same God* which worketh all in all," 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6; xii. 4-6, 20. And in like manner, when he writes, there is "one baptism," we must regard him as saying, there is *only one*, as announcing not only that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," but as well that baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God," that being spiritual it cannot be ritual, that as there is but one baptism—that, namely, by the one Spirit—baptism with water "is nothing in the world," and as it would be

sinful to put the nonentity of an idol along with the "one God," so it is sinful to put the nonentity of a ritual baptism along with the "one baptism" of the Spirit.

In 1 Tim. ii. 5, we read, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." From this text Protestants deem it a valid inference that there is *only one* mediator, and that to speak of angels or saints as mediators, is to commit a mistake something similar to that of the man who believes in "gods many, and lords many." And when we read there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," surely the inference is no less just, that there is *only one baptism*, and that to introduce "divers washings" into the Christian system, would be as really to err. Because the New Testament economy speaks of the Spirit's operations as the "one baptism," it leaves no place for *another* baptism, with water.

## VIII.

"Buried with him in baptism."—COL. ii. 12.

It will not be necessary to say much upon the expression "buried with Him in baptism." Whatever meaning we attach to the same words in the fuller passage, Rom. vi. 3, 4, must be given to them here. If the right view there was that it is a spiritual baptism which is spoken of, the conclusion cannot be escaped that a spiritual baptism here too is intended. Besides, the strain of the apostle's reasoning in this passage, shews that this is his meaning. There is a death spoken of, and that is clearly a spiritual death, "dead in sins." There is a resurrection spoken of, and that is as clearly a spiritual resurrection, for it is "through the faith of the operation of God," and it is afterwards added, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above; . . . set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," iii. 1, 2. But if the death and the resurrection are both spiritual, the burial which comes between them must be spiritual too. Now the burial and the resurrection together, go to

make up the baptism, "*buried* in baptism, wherein also ye are *risen*." Therefore the baptism must be spiritual.

The *preceding context* shews the same thing. Paul has said to the Colossians, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him; rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," verses 6-8. In these verses there is not only a counsel, there is also a caution—not only an injunction as to how they should walk, but an injunction also as to how they should not walk. He had already warned them against being beguiled with enticing words, verse 4. He comes now to particulars, and says, "Beware lest any man spoil you," &c., as above. And then, as a reason why they should be built up in Christ and stablished in the faith, a reason why they should not go after philosophy and vain deceit in any way not after Christ, he adds, "for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and *ye are complete in Him*." Christ is all in all. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He is the head of all principality and power. To have received Christ, to be united to Him, is everything to the believer, "*ye are complete in Him*." If ye have been united to Him, there is every reason why ye should be built up in Him, why ye should not go after philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. It is then added, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." The construction of the passage shews that this circumcision is implied in the completeness of the disciple. It is allowed on all hands to be spiritual. It is the circumcision "of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." It is a "circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." Well then, the apostle continues, "Buried with Him in baptism."

The baptism stands on the same plane with the circumcision. If the one be spiritual, so must the other be. If the one be included in union to Christ, so must the other. The argument of the apostle is—Union to Christ is the great thing. The one thing needful is to believe in Christ, to receive Him, to be united to Him. They who have this are complete. They need no outward circumcision. They already possess the true circumcision, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. They need no outward baptism. They already possess the true baptism, being buried with Him in baptism, wherein also they are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God. The passage thus goes to shew, not only that a spiritual baptism is intended, but that this is the only baptism required of the Christian, union to his Saviour superseding at once the circumcision with hands, and the baptism with water.

The same thing is further shewn also by the *succeeding context*, in which we read that Christ, forgiving sin, “blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” There was a handwriting of ordinances against the sinner, a burdensome ritual, a perplexing round of ceremonial observances, which could never make the comers thereto perfect. It was against him, for it kept up “a remembrance of sins,” and spoke of blood yet to be shed, more precious than of bulls and of goats, of a cleansing to be effected more thorough than any ritual washing. But from the man who has “all trespasses forgiven,” this handwriting is taken away. If justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses, there are no sins unforgiven of which to be reminded, no blood more precious than what has now purged him, no Spirit more pure than that of which he has to some extent tasted. For him the handwriting of ordinances has been nailed to the cross. Jesus submitted to it, fulfilled it, and took it away. Jesus, who needed no circumcision for himself, was circumcised, and therefore His people are free from the ordinance. Jesus,

who needed no baptism, was baptized, and therefore His people are free from this too. Not one tittle of the law was to fail till all should be fulfilled. But Jesus has fulfilled it in these, as well as in other particulars, having been circumcised in His infancy, and baptized in His manhood. In Him as their head, His people have fulfilled the law. But, personally, they are free from it. Its ordinances are not binding upon them. Their obligation has ceased. Christ has blotted out the handwriting, and taken it out of the way, "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances," Eph. ii. 15.

## IX.

"The doctrine of baptisms."—HEB. vi. 2.

1. The doctrine of baptisms is one of the elementary points of the Gospel. It is classed with repentance, faith, &c., as forming the foundation from which Christians are urged to proceed forward to higher attainments. They who rest satisfied with these doctrines are declared by the apostle to be babes, such as have need of milk and not of strong meat (see preceding chapter). But it is notorious that such topics recur again and again in all the current works on theology, and that few get further. The doctrine of baptisms is not yet a settled point. The conclusion must be, that the Church is in its infancy, that it has not its senses exercised by reason of use to discern both good and evil, and that therefore there is room for extracting new views on this point from the word of God.

2. That which, in regard to baptism, belongs to the Gospel, is a doctrine, "the doctrine of baptisms." If the text be adduced to shew that any ceremonial baptism should now be practised, it would go to prove that of such there must be more than one. It speaks not of a baptism, but of baptisms. If we adopt John's baptism, we must adopt more, for not one washing, but several are included as contributing towards the doctrine. But if, as is mani-



fest, not the baptisms themselves, but the doctrine which they furnish, belongs to the new dispensation, then this has to do not with a ritual but a doctrinal baptism, with something mental or moral, something which will tell upon the understanding or affect the heart.

3. The construction of the passage furnishes the key to the nature of this doctrine. The apostle urges the converts not to be perpetually going over the old ground, satisfying themselves with laying over and over again the same foundation. He then adds, "And this will we do, if God permit," and gives as a reason that it is impossible for those who have attained a certain character, if they shall fall away, to be renewed again to repentance, to begin afresh from the beginning. His argument is—With God's permission we will go on from this foundation, which is made up of these several points, for it is impossible for those who possess this character, consisting of these several parts, if they shall fall back, ever to have the foundation laid again. If the argument has any point, then those who have had the foundation laid must be identical with those who have attained the character he speaks of. But the foundation consists of several stones, and the character includes several graces. How natural the inference that the stones which go to form the foundation are the same as the graces which enter into the character! The meaning will perhaps be more distinctly brought out by arranging the passage into two parallel columns:—

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection,

Not laying again the foundation

And this will we do, if God permit,  
for it is impossible for those  
who

(1.) Of repentance from dead works,

(1.) Were once enlightened,

(2.) And of faith toward God,

(2.) And have tasted of the heavenly  
gift,

(3.) Of the doctrine of baptisms,

(3.) And were made partakers of  
the Holy Ghost,

(4.) And of laying on of hands,

(4.) And have tasted the good word  
of God,

(5.) And of resurrection of the dead,  
and of eternal judgment.

(5.) And the powers of the world  
to come,

if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." Here it will be seen that those in whom has been laid the foundation of the doctrine of baptisms correspond with those who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and hence the inference, that the form in which Christians have to do with baptism, is as the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

This view is tenable only on the supposition that the two lines are strictly parallel, that the parts of the one correspond with the parts of the other, that when brought together they coincide not in one point only, or two, but throughout. If the members which are marked No. 3 in each column are identical, then it is natural to expect that the same will be the case with the others, that 1 of the first will correspond with 1 of the second, 2 with 2, and so on throughout. And, on the other hand, if the supposition can be made good, if it can be shewn that there is such a correspondence, that in all the other members the two series are identical, then the conclusion will be irresistible, that it is by no mere accident that "the doctrine of baptisms" has come in order opposite to "made partakers of the Holy Ghost," but that these two stand for the same thought. Let us therefore compare together the other members of each series. On the supposition in question,

(1.) Those in whom has been laid the foundation of repentance from dead works are the same with those who have been enlightened. That this should be so, we might reason, is not impossible. Repentance is a change, and for the making of this change some light is necessary. The soul of the sinner is like a dark chamber filled with loathsome reptiles, in the midst of which he dwells content, because he is not aware of their presence. If a change is to be wrought on this chamber, the reptiles must be seen, the chamber must be illuminated, or enlightened. Christ is the true light, and it is a view of Christ, and a knowledge of Him, which awakens true repentance in the soul. This change is not only called, as here, repentance from dead works, but it is also

described as a turning from darkness to light. The two ideas are brought together in the passage, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise *from the dead*, and Christ shall give thee *light*," Eph. v. 14.

Perhaps the following passage will serve to strengthen this view, "They repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place," &c., Luke xi. 32, 33. In referring to the case of Jonah (page 138), I took occasion to remark that he was a sign to the Ninevites, because God's dealings with him were emblematic of the method in which He would deal with them. His repentance was the pattern on which they were to shape theirs. His deliverance was the confirmation to them that repentance would not be in vain. But here it is added, "No man, when he hath lighted a candle," &c. What is the link of connection? With the aid derived from other passages of Scripture, can we be at any loss? Jonah was a penitent, crying out by reason of his affliction unto the LORD, and obtaining deliverance. Jonah was a preacher, crying out to the people, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." His preaching begat his likeness. "They repented at the preaching of Jonas." And this was the design of God, for "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light." A spark of grace was kindled in the heart of Jonah, a spiritual work was begun. Repentance was produced. And this was not merely on his own account, but he was placed upon a candlestick, that they which came in might see the light. He was sent to Nineveh that they who dwelt there might have one example of an earnest penitent and a pardoned sinner. But if this be the connection, then it is perfectly scriptural to say, that they who have had the foundation of repentance laid in them have been enlightened or illuminated, and the first member of the one series is seen to correspond perfectly with the first member of the other.

(2.) They in whom has been laid the foundation of faith

toward God, are the same with those who have tasted of the heavenly gift. Faith toward God must be faith in Jesus, for no man can come to the Father but by Him. Many things are called gifts of God in Scripture. But there is one gift of God which far transcends every other, and that is the gift of His own Son. "God so loved the world, that he *gave* His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. This is indeed a *heavenly* gift, "He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven," ver. 13. And this same gift of God has said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," John vi. 51, and so, at greater length throughout the chapter. He has left us at no loss to understand what is meant by eating this bread, when He says, "He that *cometh* to me shall never hunger; and he that *believeth* on me shall never thirst," ver. 35. He that is possessed of faith toward God, faith in Christ, has eaten of this bread, has tasted of the heavenly gift; and the second member of the one series, therefore, corresponds with the second member of the other.

(3.) They in whom has been laid the foundation of the doctrine of baptisms, have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost. This, I trust, will sufficiently appear both from the foregoing and from the sequel. And therefore, without dwelling longer upon the clause itself, I pass on to the next.

(4.) Those in whom has been laid the foundation of the doctrine of the laying on of hands, have tasted the good word of God. In bringing out the parallelism here, I would not wish to speak too confidently. Very arrogant assumptions have been often based upon a very slender induction of facts, in connection with the subject of laying on of hands; and claims put forth which have moved the ridicule, or brought down the contempt of those who measure things by their results. Even now, and in Pro-

testant Churches, mysterious powers are supposed to flow from the laying on of the hands of a bishop, or the hands of the presbytery, and the man who dispenses sacraments must have this seal to his mission. Let it be observed that in this passage the apostle speaks of the *doctrine* of the laying on of hands. It is not with an outward act that we have to do, but with a doctrine, the doctrine which is the New Testament expression of that act. The act itself, as in use before the commencement of the spiritual era, is to be taken into account as serving to explain the doctrine. Now we read, "He laid His hands on a few sick folk, and healed them," Mark vi. 5. "He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them," Luke iv. 40. "He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight," Luke xiii. 13. In these cases the laying on of hands was accompanied by *healing*. Among the signs which the Saviour intimated would follow them that believe, in the new economy, we read, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," Mark xvi. 18. In this last passage the laying on of hands is carried over to the new dispensation, and that it may be in character with everything else in that, we must regard it as carried over not in the letter, but in the spirit. The sickness which the Gospel contemplates is a sickness of soul. It is for the healing of this that believers are sent out into the world. To ascertain what are the means they are to employ, we have but to compare another passage, "He sent His word and healed them," Ps. cvii. 20. Healing in the Saviour's time was effected by laying on of hands. Healing, on the Psalmist's shewing, has been effected by sending out the word of God. Is not the one idea the counterpart of the other? Is not the spiritual expression of laying on of hands identified with ministering the word?

Let us now look at the corresponding member of the other series, "They who have tasted the good word of God." The word, *ἔφημα*, is properly that which is spoken, uttered, given forth. It seems to refer not so much to a system or body of abstract truth, as rather to truth communicated from one to another. It is of frequent occurrence

in the New Testament. A few instances of its use may serve to make good this point. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word, *ῥῆμα*, that *proceedeth out of* the mouth of God," Matt. iv. 4. "Peter called to mind the word, *ῥῆμα*, that *Jesus said unto him*," Mark xiv. 72. "Be it unto me according to thy word," *ῥῆμα*, the word thou hast spoken unto me, Luke i. 38. "The words, *ῥήματα*, that *I speak unto you*, they are spirit, and they are life," John vi. 63. "The words *ῥημάτων* which were spoken before by the holy prophets," 2 Pet. iii. 2. In all these cases—and the list might be considerably enlarged—the *ῥῆμα* is something spoken, uttered, or communicated. But to taste is to participate in, to partake of. Those who taste the heavenly gift partake of Christ by faith, become one with Him. Those then who taste the good word, the *ῥῆμα* of God, partake of the communication of truth, they become fellow-workers with God in holding forth that word which is to heal men. But this is exactly what we found to be implied in the corresponding clause of the other series. Those who have had laid in them the foundation of the doctrine of laying on of hands have ministered the word; and now we see that those who have tasted the *ῥῆμα*, have partaken in the communication of God's Gospel or good news, in other words, they have ministered the word. So that here again the parallelism is complete.

(5.) Those in whom has been laid the foundation of the doctrine of "resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment," "have tasted the powers of the world to come." Here it should be observed that the word *and*, which connects the eternal judgment in the second verse with the preceding clauses, is not the same as that which connects these clauses together among themselves. In the one case it is *τε*, in the other *καί*. I believe the difference which is indicated by this change is that the *τε* is intended to carry the word doctrine along with it, and the *καί* is not, that the word doctrine is to be supplied in the two clauses connected with the first by *τε*, while it is not to be supplied in the last clause. We should thus read the passage as follows :—

## The foundation

Of repentance from dead works,  
 And (καὶ) of faith towards God,  
 Of the doctrine of baptisms,  
 And (καὶ) of the doctrine of laying on of hands,  
 And (καὶ) of the doctrine of resurrection of the dead,  
 And (καὶ) of eternal judgment.

The two points we have now to consider from this list, are, therefore,—1. The doctrine of resurrection of the dead; and, 2. Eternal judgment.

The reason why the expression *the doctrine* occurs in the one case, and not in the other, I take to be this, that what the apostle would have us to do to get at his meaning is, in the one instance to translate a fact into a doctrine,—that just as in the two preceding cases, his meaning is to be found, not in literal washings or literal laying on of hands, but in the spiritual equivalents of these, so here he is speaking, not of a literal resurrection, but of the spiritual equivalent of that,—whereas, in the other case, the *judgment*, κῆρυμα, is to be regarded as needing no such translation, but standing on a line with repentance and faith, and containing itself a doctrinal thought.

Let us examine these two points in succession :—

[1.] The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead seems taught in such passages as these,—“Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in *newness of life*,” Rom. vi. 4. God “hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together *in heavenly places* in Christ Jesus,” Eph. ii. 5, 6. “If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above*, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. *Set your affection on things above*, not on things on the earth,” Col. iii. 1, 2. The doctrine of the resurrection would, therefore, seem to be to this effect, that as Christ was raised from the dead, sinners are raised from dead works to newness of life, to heavenly-mindedness; that as he was raised up by the glory of the Father, so God raises up those who

are to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that as a divine power was exerted in the one case, a divine energy is put forth in the other. The doctrine seems to require that this divine energy should be looked for and expected to follow the communication of the truth, the ministration of the word, for this is part of that fruit which was brought forth in those to whom the word of the truth of the Gospel had come, Col. i. 5, 6. They, therefore, who have had laid in them the foundation of the doctrine of the resurrection, may be supposed to be those whose communications or ministrations have been blessed for the conversion of sinners, for awakening in men that repentance "from dead works," referred to above.

[2.] Eternal judgment, κρίμα αἰώνιον. The word κρίμα signifies properly condemnation, a condemnatory sentence. It is several times translated "damnation" in our version, as in Matt. xxiii. 14, with the parallel passages Mark xii. 40, Luke xx. 47; also in Rom. iii. 18; xiii. 2; 1 Cor. xi. 29; 1 Tim. v. 12; 2 Pet. ii. 3. That it carries with it the idea of a *condemnatory sentence*, also appears from such passages as these,—“We are sure that the *judgment* of God is according to truth, *against* them which commit such things,” Rom. ii. 2. “The judgment, κρίμα, was by one to condemnation, *κατάκριμα*,” Rom. v. 16. That the power of pronouncing sentence of condemnation belonged to apostles in the early Church, we have one signal proof in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. To the eleven, as representing His Church, Jesus had said, not only “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,” but also, “Whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,” John xx. 23. And the claims which a formal priesthood have built upon this verse are matter of history. Their true application would appear to be given, where it is stated, “He that is spiritual judgeth, ἀνακρίνει, all things, yet he himself is judged of no man,” 1 Cor. ii. 15. To some, at least of the spiritual, is given *discerning of spirits*, διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, and they judge righteous judgment. And their judgment, κρίσις, in some cases becomes a κρίμα, an act of condemnation.



Bearing in mind the heinous things that have been said of excommunication, greater and lesser, and the weight that has been attached, in different quarters, to Church censures, I feel that the doctrine should be stated cautiously, and with all humility. But I feel it to be no less a solemn truth that there are cases in which what is bound on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and the judgment pronounced by the believer, being a "judgment according to truth," shall be ratified in eternity. As, then, I would view the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead as pointing to the converting influence of that preaching which is in spirit and in power, so I would look upon the eternal judgment, the κρίμα, as pointing to that sentence anticipated by the believer now, and at length carried out upon all who do not repent and obey the Gospel.

We have now to consider the corresponding member of the other series, "have tasted the powers of the world to come." The world to come is μέλλων αἰὼν, the coming age. By this expression, if used before the descent of the Spirit, we should at once understand the dispensation of the Spirit, the Gospel economy. That the same thing is intended here seems likely, from the circumstance that though formally come, but a small measure of its powers had been evolved. It was still the coming age, just as in early morn we call the day which has dawned, the coming day. In the second chapter of this epistle, the writer speaks of "the world to come, οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, whereof we speak," of which we are speaking. The things of which he was speaking, were the things pertaining to the Gospel of Jesus, to the great salvation, so that the coming world is here the world which has to do with this Gospel, the sphere in which its energies are to be developed. But if so, then the powers of this coming age are the powers which belong to the Christian dispensation. And what are these?

Jesus is the head of this dispensation,—and Jesus says of himself, "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so *the Son quickeneth* whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed*

*all judgment unto the Son,"* John v. 21, 22. To taste these powers is to participate in them, to be here a fellow-worker with Christ. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of *death unto death*, and to the other of *life unto life*," 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. The experience of every true believer bearing testimony to his Master, will be that which this apostle found at Rome, "*Some believed* the things which were spoken, and *some believed not*," Acts xxviii. 24; and the result to these two classes of persons must be, that "he that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life*: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but *the wrath of God abideth on him*," John iii. 36. Need anything further be said to make good the position that to have tasted the powers of the world to come, to have been a fellow-worker with Jesus, to have wielded the Spirit, is equivalent to the corresponding member of the other series? Have we not, in the passages quoted, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment?

If the reasoning which has been held throughout be just, it is no mere hypothesis that the ideas in the third member of each series coincide. The first, the second, the fourth, and the fifth of the one series coincide with the corresponding clause of the other, and it cannot be that the very central members of each can be other than identical; and this view, which is in harmony with all Scripture, has thus the benefit of one additional confirmation, that the baptism with which Christians have to do is the baptism of the Spirit.

It is an additional recommendation of the view which has been drawn out of this passage, that it presents us with a graduated scale, in which the progress of the believer, to a certain extent, is depicted. There is, first, repentance from dead works, the turning point of his history, the opening of the eyes of his understanding, leading him to forsake his sins, and cast away his idols. There is, next, faith, the receiving of the Son of God as his salvation, feeding on the bread of life, and growing

thereby. Then follows the heavenly baptism. He is made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, his whole heart and soul brought into obedience unto Christ. Then there is the forth-putting of spiritual energy. He goes to others and says, Come with us, and we will do you good. He holds forth the word of life, and by doctrine, and precept, and example, persuades and beseeches men, in Christ's name, to be reconciled to God. And, last of all, invested with the powers of the world to come, he sees the result of all this. His teaching and example conduce to soften the penitent, and to harden the reprobate. He is made a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

The argument of the apostle is, Having laid the foundation, proceed with the superstructure. Even supposing that your work could be all undone, that the foundation should be overturned, that every stone should be razed, it argues ignorance of the philosophy of religion to keep perpetually labouring at the first principles of the Gospel. Were it possible for any to whom you have spoken the word of life to abandon their position, your most urgent entreaties, your most earnest labours, could never reclaim them. They would, in that case, be beyond the reach of redemption. Or, to take another figure, having begotten spiritual children, having fed them with the sincere milk of the word, be not satisfied with this, but break to them the bread of life, prepare for them the strong meat of Christian doctrine. As you would not have them to continue children in understanding—as you would not wish for yourselves a life of intellectual and spiritual nonage, so learn to study, and inculcate upon your converts, the deeper and more hidden truths of the divine word. For if it were possible that the divine life should become extinct in any soul in which it has been kindled, no diligence on your part could ever awake it anew. As it would be hopeless to resuscitate a dead body by the most liberal supply of the food of infants, so it would be impossible to regenerate an apostate from the faith by the most frequent recurrence to the first principles of the Gospel. The true

wisdom is to minister to the necessities of the spiritual nature as they arise, to give milk to babes, to proceed from that to strong meat as they are able to bear it. And the further advanced men become in the Christian course, the less power will temptations of a worldly character have upon them—the more certainly will they have made their calling and election sure.

There is one objection to this view which must not be overlooked. It will be said by many that it takes for granted the possibility of true believers falling irrecoverably from grace. The interpretation which has been given to the clauses in verses 4 and 5, refers them to Christians, converted persons, and yet it is added of these characters, "If they shall fall away," or literally, "It is impossible for such falling away to be renewed." Now, the dread of adopting any view that would even seem to militate against the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints will be sufficient with many at once to set it aside. Upon this point, therefore, I remark that the objection, so far as it applies, is not peculiar to this view, but bears upon every one which refers these clauses (verses 4, 5) to true Christians. Either they refer to such or they do not. If we say that they do, then whatever interpretation we give them, the objection is equally applicable. And if we should take the other side, and say that they do not, we involve ourselves in another difficulty which seems equally great—that of affirming that those who, among other characters, had tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, were not converted persons. This latter difficulty Barnes considers so great that he sees no escape from it except in the opposite conclusion, that the passage does apply to true Christians, and roundly maintains that "the passage *proves* that if true Christians should apostatize, it would be impossible to renew and save them." But by taking this position he does not consider that he is opposing the doctrine of final perseverance, for he adds immediately after, "If then it should be asked whether I believe that any true Christian ever did or ever

will fall from grace, and wholly lose his religion, I would answer unhesitatingly, *No*." A little before he had said, "It is material to remark here, that the apostle does not say that any true Christian ever had fallen away. He makes a statement of what would occur on the supposition that such a thing should happen—but a statement may be made of what would occur on the supposition that a certain thing should take place, and yet it be morally certain that the event never would happen. It would be easy to suppose what would happen if the ocean should overflow a continent, or if the sun should cease to rise, and still there be entire certainty that such an event never would occur." While Barnes' interpretation of the several clauses is quite distinct from that given above, his answer to the general objection taken to any interpretation which refers them to true Christians, will equally apply in the one case as in the other.

## X.

"Meats and drinks, and divers washings [baptisms], and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation."—HEB. ix. 10.

1. The tabernacle under the old economy consisted of two apartments—the first, called the sanctuary or holy place, within the first vail, in which was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; the second, called the holiest of all, or the holy of holies, within the second vail, in which was the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, &c., ver. 2-5.

2. The fact that up to a certain period the holy of holies was entered only once a-year, only by the high priest, and not without blood, was typical of the comparative darkness of the old dispensation. While this dispensation lasted, the way into the holiest was not made manifest. No real sacrifice to satisfy divine justice had been offered, and the dealings of God with men in regard to redemption were chiefly confined to one race, those who were justified receiving pardon from a regard not to anything already effected, but to the prospective sufferings of one who was to come, ver. 6-9.

3. The period when this dispensation passed away was at the death of Christ. The language of the apostle seems to imply that the first dispensation had been closed before he wrote. He says the first covenant *had* ordinances. He says this tabernacle was a figure for the time *then present*, and that it was imposed until the time of reformation. The words which follow imply that that time had arrived, "*But Christ being come*;" as though he had said, A greater and more perfect tabernacle has been instituted, the existence of which has made the other obsolete. That the *death* of Christ was the point at which the old dispensation terminated, it would not seem difficult to shew. Then the vail of the temple was rent in twain, disclosing the contents of the inner apartment, and thus intimating that the way into the holiest was made manifest. Further, the vail was a type of Christ's flesh, and then His flesh was pierced and torn by the nails, and the way into the holiest, not in figure only, but in fact, opened up, Heb. x. 20. The lips of the Saviour had just exclaimed, "It is finished," and among other things, the old economy was finished. The perfect sacrifice had been offered, by which the estrangement that subsisted between God and man was to be done away, and through this offering, as through the rent vail, access to be opened up by one Spirit unto the Father.

4. One distinctive character of the old dispensation was, that it had carnal ordinances, rites or ceremonies, among which are included divers baptisms of an external character, and therefore with the close of the dispensation the practice of these should have ceased. One part of this statement will be readily admitted. In the words of the apostle, "The first tabernacle had also ordinances" (margin, ceremonies), and it "stood in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances." That such belonged to it, few will think it worth while to deny. But it will not be so readily admitted that these ordinances were, in such a sense, proper to the old economy, as that no ordinance of a similar character could have place in the new. And yet this seems no more than a fair inference from the general argument. The apostle is drawing

a parallel, by way of contrast, between the two dispensations. His argument is to the effect, that while in the one dispensation there were *shadows*, in the other there was the *substance*,—that while in the one there were *typical sacrifices* that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience, in the other there was *the real sacrifice* which should purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God,—that while in the one there were *carnal ordinances*, in the other there were *spiritual verities*. But as the first dispensation was only imposed until the time of reformation, until Christ should come, it follows that Christ being come, and the first tabernacle no longer imposed, neither are those carnal ordinances of which it so much consisted imposed any longer. In other words, carnal ordinances, ordinances of the flesh, rites which sanctify only to the purifying of the flesh, including all the divers baptisms which answer to this description, are done away, and have no place in the Gospel economy. And therefore baptism with water cannot be a Gospel ordinance.

The only thing that can be objected to this reasoning is, that it may be said—Water-baptism as now practised is not a carnal ordinance, and does not fall fairly to be included among the divers washings of the old economy. In answer to this, I remark that it has many points in common with the other washings referred to. It is a carnal ordinance in the same sense as they are, that is to say, it relates to the flesh, it is an application to the flesh of a cleansing medium. It is not spiritual, for it cannot make the comers thereto perfect as concerning the conscience. It can only sanctify to the purifying of the flesh. To say that there is a spiritual reference in it, that it is an outward sign of an inward spiritual grace, is no answer to this. There was a spiritual reference in all the washings, in all the carnal ordinances of the Old Testament economy. The practice and particularity of such washings constituted a figure for the time then present, but all with reference to the spiritual economy ultimately to be introduced, and to teach men how entirely holiness became

God's house, and all that were round about Him. Besides, whatever may be said of the earlier washings, there was, towards the close of the old dispensation, a baptism between which and this it is impossible to draw any clear line of distinction. I have before shewn that the baptism of John falls clearly within the term of the old economy. From the strain of this passage it would appear that that baptism, which was one of these divers washings, is done away. And if this be so, then on what principle can a baptism which is all but identical with it be retained?

## XI.

"The like figure whereunto, *even* baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."—1 PET. iii. 21.

It ought not to be difficult to ascertain what baptism is here intended, for four characters are ascribed to it by the apostle.

1. It is the antitype of water. This idea is somewhat obscured in the common version, but the word rendered *figure* is ἀντίτυπον, antitype, and the passage might be translated—*the antitype answering to which doth now save us, even baptism*. Now, as formerly remarked, the type and the antitype are not of the same texture. If the one belongs to the natural, the other belongs to the spiritual world. Baptism with water cannot be the antitype of the flood, for this would be to make water the antitype of water. Both may be typical of something else, but the one cannot be typical of the other. The baptism which is the antitype of the flood, is evidently the baptism of the Spirit.

2. This baptism saves. The language of the apostle is express, "Baptism doth save us." I shall not attempt here to argue with the man who believes that the application of a little water to the body, according to a set form, saves the soul. But no man with his eyes open will venture to affirm that all who have been subjected to the rite, administered in any one mode, are saved men, or else he must have a different idea of salvation from that which is given in the Gospel. Many such, like Simon



Magus, notwithstanding their baptism, remain still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. But the baptism of this passage *doth save*. It must be the baptism of the Spirit, for, says Paul, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

3. It is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." A good conscience, or a purified conscience, is possessed by the believer; for it is by the blood of Jesus that the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience (see pp. 195, 196), and the man to whom this blood is applied is "justified by faith." To him, therefore, the words apply, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is *born of God*:" in other words, it is the spiritual man who alone can give the answer of a good conscience. Again, this answer is *toward God*—such as will approve itself in the eyes of Him who "looketh on the heart." And hence it accompanies faith in the heart, and ensures salvation. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Such a confession is obviously not that of the lips merely, but of the life—an "epistle written not with ink," much less with water, "but with the Spirit of the living God:" in other words, it is the baptism of the Spirit.

4. It is "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." From the order in our English version we should be apt to connect these words with the clause, "Doth now save us." But it is not so in the original. The proper connection will at once appear on simply restoring the order of the original, and omitting the parenthetical clause, when the passage will read, "Whereunto (or, answering to which) also us the antitype now saves, even *baptism by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*." The baptism of the text is therefore "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," and it is connected with His ascension, for it is immediately added, "who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God." But in no way can it be said of baptism with water, that it is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for it was in use before His death, and therefore before His

resurrection. If we read of one or two instances of its administration after His resurrection, we read of "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," being baptized in Jordan, before Jesus had entered upon His ministry, Matt. iii. 5, 6. But the baptism of the Spirit is emphatically by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. During His personal ministry it is said that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, *because that Jesus was not yet glorified,*" John vii. 39. But after His resurrection and ascension the promise of the Father was fulfilled, and disciples were baptized with the Holy Ghost. Peter, explaining to the people the character of the wonderful effusion of Pentecost, says, "*This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. THEREFORE, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear,*" Acts ii. 32, 33. It would scarcely be possible to find a closer parallel to the words of the same apostle in the passage under consideration, "*Baptism by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God.*" Who will be bold enough to deny that the baptism referred to in both instances is the same, the baptism of the Holy Ghost?

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## CHAPTER VI.

EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT  
BEARING UPON THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM, BUT NOT  
MENTIONING IT BY NAME.

### I.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? . . . Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—JOHN iv. 10, 11, 14.

"Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"—JOHN vii. 37-39.

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."—REV. xxi. 6.

"He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. . . . The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—REV. xxii. 1, 17.

In the first of these passages, the expression *living water* occurs twice, and it is represented as being in the recipient a well of water springing up into everlasting life. It is obvious that literal water is not what is here referred to. Not the most delicious earthly fountain ever discovered, could have such properties ascribed to it. Nothing that the natural eye of man has ever looked on, could be said to supply to him who partakes of it a well of water springing up into everlasting life. In the same chapter meat is spoken of in a higher than its natural signification,—“I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.” If this is the Saviour’s meaning when He speaks of *meat to eat*, his meaning must be something corresponding when he speaks of *water to drink*.

The next passage leaves us at no loss to understand what is intended by the living water.—“This spake he of the Spirit.” He is that living water which shall be to him that partakes of it a well of water springing up into everlasting life. And a reason is added why the Saviour used this figurative language, why He did not name the Spirit—“for the Holy Ghost was not yet given.” The spiritual era had not yet commenced. The age of types was still in being, and therefore typical language was used, and water being a recognised type of the Spirit, this is the word which the Saviour employs.

Little need be added upon the passages which I have placed along with these, from the Revelation of John. This book is admitted to abound in symbolical language.

And here we read of "the water of life," "the fountain of the water of life," "a pure river of water of life," and of this water as provided especially for him that is *athirst*. These expressions must mean the same as the living water in the Gospel of John, with respect to which Jesus says, "If any man *thirst*, let him come unto me, and drink." The water of life must be the same as the living water, that is to say, it must point to the Spirit.

None of these passages, therefore, can be viewed as favouring a ritual baptism, the use of literal water in a religious ceremony. They speak, not of washing, but of drinking, and the language is seen to refer not to an outward act, but to a deep inward realization of the Spirit's influences.

## II.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—JOHN iii. 5.

1. Whatever is meant by the words, born of water and the Spirit, is absolutely necessary in order to salvation. The statement of Jesus is express. He is speaking when appealed to as a teacher come from God. He prefaces His words with the solemn asseveration, Amen, amen, Verily, verily. If then water-baptism be referred to, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that if in any instance that be neglected, there can be then no entrance into the kingdom. This argument may be consistently employed by the Romanist, for with him there is no salvation out of his Church, and baptism with water is the door of entrance to the Church. But will the Protestant venture to affirm, in the ritual sense, that no unbaptized man, woman, or child, can be saved? If this be so, who then can be sure that he is safe? And what is the inquirer to do, or when may he rest satisfied that he has been born of water, so long as the vexed questions of who are authorized to administer the ordinance, and which is the divine mode of administering it, remain unsettled? Must he betake himself to the Romanist, Anglican, and Immer-

sionist, to make sure that in one quarter or other he has obtained the requisite passport? Or will it be necessary, in addition to this, to have recourse to the trine immersions of the Oriental Churches? If born of water means baptized with water, then this baptism he must have, or he never can see the kingdom.

But there is another view supported by the names of such men as Calvin, Lampe, Tholuck, and others, a view analogous to that which we were led to adopt of the words baptize with the Holy Ghost *and fire*; and which, with perhaps slight modifications, regards the words as equivalent to—*born of the cleansing, purifying Spirit*. “To be born of water and of the Spirit, is just to be born of the Spirit acting like water, in purifying the soul as water does the body.”—(M'Crie's *Lectures on Baptism*, page 16.) If this be a correct exposition of the passage, it gives no countenance whatever to a rite, but refers solely to the operation of the Spirit.

Something more, however, may be intended by the expression rendered “born of water and of the Spirit.” That we may not misunderstand it, it should be carefully kept in mind that each of the words here translated *water*, and *Spirit*, is applied in other cases to subjects in both the natural and the spiritual world. The feeling in many minds is that the one word has to do only with the natural, the other only with the spiritual world. And this accordingly helps the impression that, when the two are combined, there is reference to something partaking of the character of both—an outward cleansing with water, and an inward purifying by the Spirit—a baptism, in short, both ritual and spiritual. But if there is not this broad line of distinction to be drawn between the two, if it be true that each belongs, sometimes to the natural, and sometimes to the spiritual world, it will be the less difficult to believe that when the two are combined, the reference may be to effects which belong to the same great class, either both natural, or both spiritual.

That the word *water* belongs to both kingdoms, the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace, will not, I

trust, need to be argued at any length after what has been said in the preceding section. It there appeared that besides its well-known meaning in the natural world, it has a meaning in the spiritual, and that the *living water* of the kingdom is the *Holy Ghost*. The other word, πνεῦμα, spirit, as well as the corresponding term in the Hebrew, is also used of both classes of subjects, the natural and the spiritual. In order to shew this, it will only be necessary to set down a few passages, putting the several words by which the Hebrew רוּחַ, or the Greek πνεῦμα, is translated *in italics*, so that the reader may be able to trace it throughout. "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the *breath* of all mankind," Job xii. 10. "Thou takest away their *breath*, they die, and return to their dust," Ps. civ. 29. "Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold I will cause *breath* to enter into you, and ye shall live, and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put *breath* in you, and ye shall live." "There was no *breath* in them. Then said He unto me, Prophecy unto the *wind* (margin, *breath*), prophecy, son of man, and say to the *wind*, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four *winds*, O *breath*, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the *breath* came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." "I shall put my *Spirit* in you, and ye shall live," Ezek. xxxvii. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14. "Except a man be born of water and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. . . . That which is born of the *Spirit* is *spirit*. . . . The *wind* bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the *Spirit*," John iii. 5, 6, 8. "The body without the *spirit* (margin, *breath*) is dead," James ii. 26. "He had power to give *life* (margin, *breath*) unto the image of the beast," Rev. xiii. 15. From these passages I think it will appear that the Hebrew רוּחַ and the Greek πνεῦμα point to the principle of life, but that this life may

be either natural or spiritual, according to the nature of the subject.

Each of the words *water* and *spirit* may refer, therefore, either to the natural or the spiritual. It is but fair to conclude, that to whichever of these the one refers, the other will refer to the same. Now, it is generally agreed, that one of these words must refer to the spiritual world, that the *breath*, the *wind*, the *Spirit*, is in this instance God's Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the great regenerator, the author of spiritual life. The water ought, therefore, to refer to the same class of subjects. When the Saviour speaks of being *born* of water, He surely refers to the *living* water, and that, we know, is *the Holy Ghost*. The combined meaning of the whole expression is, therefore, born of the Holy Ghost, the great purifier, and the great regenerator of men.

It is further observable that there is no preposition in the original, corresponding to the second *of* in our version, and also that there is no article before the word rendered Spirit, so that we ought to read the passage—"Except a man be born of water and wind, he cannot enter into the kingdom." There are not two acts here spoken of, but one. It is a spiritual birth that is referred to, but the great agent in this is spoken of in two of his characters, which are symbolized respectively by *water*, and *wind* or *breath*. The passage might, therefore, be paraphrased as follows:—Except a man be born of the Holy Ghost, the great purifier and regenerator—which comes down as rain, and as dew upon the grass, and which bloweth where it listeth—which revives the drooping spirit, and breathes upon the dead in sins—which satisfies the thirsty soul, and awakens the careless sleepers—which is as a well of water in the believer, springing up into everlasting life, and enabling him to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit,—except a man be thus born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Once more,—The ritual view does not suit the context, the spiritual does. The expression "born of water and the Spirit," may be regarded as an expansion of the other

in verse 3, "born again," or literally "born from above." Now, this expression can scarcely be applied to water-baptism, for though, in one respect, water comes from above, yet, as used in this ordinance, it may be more frequently taken from the brook or stream which runs at our feet. The advocate of immersion, in particular, does not meet it from above, but *from beneath*. Jesus himself was baptized in, or at, Jordan. The Spirit which lighted upon Him thereafter came from above, but the water with which he was baptized was in, or was taken from, the bed of the river. The view, therefore, which gives to the words the meaning *born of the Spirit, the regenerator and purifier*, is much more in harmony with the previous declaration, than that which sees here a reference to water-baptism. Again,—In the subsequent context, the subject is pursued without any further reference to water. The Saviour goes on as if the only subject which had been introduced was the spiritual new-birth. He affirms that as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, so that (and obviously that only) which is born of the Spirit is spirit. He draws an illustration of the Spirit's work in conversion from the natural world, but He does not again advert to, or name the subject of water. As the reference to the wind is designed to call our thoughts to the Spirit as the author of life, so the reference to water must have been designed to call our thoughts to the same Spirit as the author of purification.

### III.

"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. . . . He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit. . . . Ye ought to wash one another's feet."—JOHN xiii. 8, 10, 14.

"Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—1 COR. vi. 11.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—REV. i. 5; vii. 14.

In the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel by John, we read of Jesus that "He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet." This was on the last occasion



of His keeping the passover with them. It is the only instance in which we read of Jesus engaging in the act of washing. When about to enter on His public ministry, He went down to Jordan and was baptized by John. But He "himself baptized not." On more than one occasion we are told that He refrained from ablutions commonly practised, or vindicated His disciples for neglecting them. But now, at the close of His ministry, He washes the disciples' feet, and says to them, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Now to baptize is to wash. And therefore when Jesus gives His disciples a command to baptize, if any act of His during His earthly ministry is to be viewed as furnishing the interpretation of this command, it should be not that which was performed at Jordan, but that which took place in the upper room at Jerusalem. If either of these could be called Christian baptism, it is not the first, but the second. For *that* was John's baptism, administered by the forerunner, preparatory to the Christian dispensation. But of *this* Christ has said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, *ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*"

This conclusion is fatal to immersion, for that stipulates for the dipping, not of a part, but of the whole body. It is equally fatal to the common practice of sprinkling on the face, for when Peter suggested, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my *head*," Jesus refused to comply. If there is scriptural authority for a washing with water in the Christian system, there is scriptural authority for a washing, not of the face, nor of the whole person, but of the feet. No language implying the use of water is anywhere found in the New Testament stronger than this, "Ye ought to wash one another's feet."

But this is not the Saviour's meaning. His object is not to impress upon us the importance of an isolated act, to teach that no man is entitled to the name Christian till he has washed another's feet. There may be occasions

when, in the literal sense of the words, to wash the feet (as in the case of the jailor at Philippi, to wash the stripes) of a disciple is a Christian duty. But this is because it is in accordance with the spirit of Christianity, which teaches to do good to all as we have opportunity. But the passage before us contains a much higher thought than this. The act of the Saviour, like all the others of His life, was symbolical, and the example which He inculcates is an example to be followed, not in the letter, but in the spirit.

The passage contains within itself the key to its exposition. When Peter desired a more thorough washing, "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." It is worthy of remark that the word translated *wash* in the first clause of this verse is λούω, in the second νίπτω, and that the first of these occurs only this once in the passage, while the second is the word used throughout in speaking of the washing of the feet. The one appears to refer to a more complete washing than the other. It is the same word as is used by the apostle in the expression, "having our bodies washed," literally washed *as to the body*, Heb. x. 22. It describes a washing of the whole person, and hence the Saviour says here, "He that is washed, ὁ λελουμένος, is *clean every whit*." The other word is used of the washing of particular members of the body, as of the face (Matt. vi. 17), the eyes (John ix. 7, 11, 15), the hands (Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 3), and the feet (here, and 1 Tim. v. 10). Regarding the washing in the two cases—"He that is washed," "needeth to wash his feet,"—as symbolical, we must regard them as symbolical, not of the same, but of different spiritual acts.

The first may be viewed as pointing to the washing of regeneration, the act of conversion, which takes place simultaneously with the first application of the blood of sprinkling to the heart of the sinner, if indeed it does not point to the act of justification itself. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth *from all sin*," 1 John i. 7. When the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shews them to the soul, when the eyes of the understanding are opened,

when Christ is revealed to the sinner as exceeding precious, and he takes hold of the hope set before him in the Gospel, he is converted from the error of his ways, he can join in the hymn of praise, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed (λούω) us from our sins in His own blood," Rev. i. 5; for he is himself "washed (ἀπολούω), sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. "He hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life," John v. 24. Now it is not of this that the incident before us was symbolical. Jesus says, "He that is washed (λούω) needeth not." Conversion is an act which takes place only once in a man's history. When he becomes a new creature, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And the disciples having received one washing when "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," went out to John, and "were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins," Jesus refused to give another washing of the whole person, symbolical of the same great change.

But Jesus not only authorizes, but insists upon another washing, saying of it, "If I wash (νίπτω) thee not, thou hast no part with me." This seems to point not to the regeneration, but to the renewing (see on Titus iii. 5) of the Holy Ghost,—the truth that the believer must be renewed day by day, must be ever drawing fresh supplies of grace from God's Spirit. He needeth to wash (νίπτω) his feet. Passing through this world he contracts defilement, and as he needs to pray continually, "Give me this day my daily bread," so to add, "and forgive me my (daily) sins."

The doctrine of the passage, "Ye ought to wash one another's feet," thus seems to be, that it is the duty of disciples to watch over, and to promote the spiritual improvement of one another, that while Christ has given "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," it is for this, among other ends, "for the *perfecting* of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ," Eph. iv. 11, 12. This

passage does not teach that God has given the Spirit, that one man may convert another. That inference is to be deduced from other places. But it does teach that God has given the Spirit for the *increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love*, Eph. iv. 16. "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification," Rom. xiv. 19 ; xv. 2.

From what has been said, I trust it will appear that the washing of the feet ranks in the same category with the washing of the whole person, that is to say, both are symbolical of spiritual acts. He that hath received the one, *needeth* to receive the other. Either both are to be taken literally, or both spiritually. If we are to have any washing with literal water, then certainly we "ought to wash one another's feet." If we can safely omit this in the letter, and take only its spiritual expression as the proper measure of our duty, we may act in the same way towards any baptism framed on the model of John's, and, parting with it in the letter, seek to carry it out in the spirit. But the Churches have agreed that the washing of the feet is binding, not in the letter, but in the spirit. The same must be true, therefore, of the washing of the face, or of the whole person. Till the Spirit was given, it existed as a rite, in the letter. Since then, we are warranted in parting with it in the letter, and required to receive it in the spirit.

#### IV.

"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."—EPH. v. 26.

1. The washing here spoken of, is not a washing with, by, or in, water, but a washing of water *by the word*. When either water baptism, or spiritual baptism, is spoken of, the language is, baptism *ἐν ὕδατι*, or *ἐν Πνεύματι*. Here the instrumentality by which the washing is effected, is not water, but something else—the word, or the communication of truth, *ἐν ῥήματι*. The expression *washing of water*, may be

viewed as indicating the character of the washing. It is a washing such as in other subjects is effected by water, that is, a washing *for the purpose of cleansing*. Beecher reminds us that even in our own language the word *wash* does not always point to cleansing. A wash is sometimes coloured, and a thing is sometimes said to be washed when it is not purified, but is simply covered over with some different substance. The word has even come, in one signification, to point to that which is the reverse of pure, as when we speak of the wash of a stable, or cow-house.—(*Baptism, its Import, and Modes*, pp. 16, 17.) But water is used for cleansing. When things are washed with water, this is done to purify them; and, therefore, the expression, a *washing of water*, a *water-washing*, may be regarded as equivalent to a washing *for purification*, so that the verse may be paraphrased,—That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the purifying washing effected by the word, or by the communication of truth. If, then, the expression *water* does not point to the agency used in this instance for washing, but to the general character of the washing, as that which is to purify,—if the instrumentality which is employed for cleansing be not material, but spiritual,—not water, but the word,—not that which tells upon the skin, or the flesh, but that which tells upon the understanding and the heart,—of necessity the cleansing itself must be, not external or ceremonial, but spiritual.

2. The end to be served by this washing is stated to be spiritual. It is “that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.” If the end to be served be spiritual, the means to effect this end must be spiritual also; and, therefore, again it follows that a spiritual and not a ceremonial washing is intended.

## V.

“He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—TITUS iii. 5.

Some have maintained, (1.) That the washing of rege-

neration refers to baptism with water, as the outward act in which the soul is born again. This view is subversive of spiritual religion, substituting conformity with a rite, with which any man may comply, for a change of heart effected by the Spirit of God. Others have supposed, (2.) That it refers to water-baptism, not as producing regeneration, but as a symbol of regeneration. This view is open to the objection that it does not furnish a satisfactory exegesis of the passage. It takes for granted that *washing of regeneration* is equivalent to *washing which is the symbol of regeneration*. It strives to avoid committing itself to the doctrine that baptism with water is regeneration, and yet it says that God *saves by this baptism*, as well as by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

To obtain a satisfactory explanation of the passage, two things must be taken into account—1. That the whole phrase is *διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως Πνεύματος ἁγίου*—not, He saved us by the washing of regeneration, *and by* the renewing of the Holy Ghost; but, He saved us by the washing of regeneration *and of* the renewing of the Holy Ghost. This consideration alone excludes every ritual explanation of the passage. There are not two separate and independent acts—an outward and an inward washing—a washing with water, and a washing with the Spirit—which together enter into and make up the position of a saved man. There is one washing by which salvation is effected, and that is the Holy Ghost's washing of regeneration and of renewal. 2. The words regeneration, *παλιγγενεσία*, and renewing, *ἀνακαινώσις*, do not express exactly the same idea. They are both parts of the same washing, the washing of the Holy Ghost, but they are not the same parts of it. There is here no tautology, but the second expression is an advance upon the first. The word "*ἀνακαινώσις*" is used of the gradual renewal of heart and life in the image of God, following upon the new birth; . . . we must not give it another and untenable meaning, that of mere incipient spiritual life."—(Alford.) This word occurs in only one other passage in Scripture, and there it must have

this meaning of gradual renewing—"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing, ἀνακαινώσει, of your mind," Rom. xii. 2; that is, by your progressive growth in grace. The passage before us refers thus solely to the Spirit's work, but it contemplates that work in its beginning and in its progress. It says nothing of a ritual baptism, but it testifies that salvation is wrought in the soul by the Spirit begetting and nourishing in it a principle of spiritual life.

## VI.

"The blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh. . . . [Moses] took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry."—HEB. ix. 13, 19-21.

"Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."—HEB. x. 22.

"The blood of sprinkling."—HEB. xii. 24.

"Sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."—1 PET. i. 2.

These passages have a less direct bearing on the general subject of baptism than the occurrence of the word sprinkle might, to some minds, at first sight seem to imply. In only one instance is water named as used in the sprinkling, and then it is conjoined with other things—"the blood of calves and of goats, *with water*, and scarlet wool, and hyssop." The sprinklings referred to were sprinklings *with blood*. We have here both the Old and the New Testament expression of the doctrine—in the one case the blood of bulls and of goats, shed by men, in obedience to a divine command, sanctifying "to the purifying of the flesh;" in the other "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God," purging "the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The doctrine of these texts is that of justification rather than of sanctification, the doctrine of an atonement to remove the guilt, rather than that of an indwelling Spirit to destroy the power, of sin in the soul.

In one passage, however, these two doctrines are

united, and we are invited to have not only "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," but also "our bodies washed with pure water." To this it will be necessary more particularly to attend. To understand the meaning of the first of these clauses, let us compare with it one or two other passages in this and the preceding chapter: "Gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." "Then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" Heb. ix. 9; x. 2; ix. 14. Here we see that that which *purges the conscience* is *blood*; that had the offering of bulls and of goats been adequate, the worshippers who presented them would have had *no more conscience of sins*; that because of their imperfection they could not make the comers thereto perfect *as to the conscience*; but that the blood of Christ *purges the conscience* from dead works. The doctrine of these texts thus is, that the only way in which a sinner can come to have "no more conscience of sins"—the only way in which he can look up to God as a reconciled Father, and feel that his sins, though many, are forgiven—the only way in which he can have peace with God—is "through our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle would have us "draw near *in full assurance of faith*," so that instead of dreading the wrath of God on account of our sins, we might "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement," Rom. v. 11. Instead of being harassed with the fear that his sins will rise up in judgment against him, the believer whose heart is "sprinkled from an evil conscience" can take up the triumphant language of the apostle, and say, "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?"

The other expression, "our bodies washed with pure water," cannot be regarded as pointing to water-baptism. As at present practised, it is administered in two forms, by sprinkling and by immersion. The passage cannot



point to the first of these, for it is, having our *bodies* washed—literally washed as to the body. And by no use of language can the sprinkling of a little water on the face be termed a washing of the body. As little can the expression point to immersion, for those who hold by the rite in this form repudiate entirely all reference to washing in its meaning. With them to baptize is to dip, and nothing else, and, therefore, it cannot be supposed that a passage which speaks of a washing can point to a practice which its most strenuous supporters tell us is no washing, but simply an immersion.

The meaning of the expression is thus given by Wishart:—"This text, as much as any that we can think of, presents a difficulty in the way of our view at first sight. We believe, however, that it is only apparent. A parallel passage in Ezekiel half removes the mystery—'Then will I sprinkle *clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean.' The verse that immediately follows says—'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' The Old Testament, then, throws light upon the subject, by using the term *clean water*, and by speaking immediately afterwards of the Holy Spirit. The genius of the passage makes it very plain that it is one thought, and that the two terms, clean water and new heart, are nothing more than different names for the same fact [rather, as appears from what follows, that they are cause and effect]. Philosophy informs us that, to apply the name clean to actual water, or indeed to any carnal or material object, would be to predicate of it what is not true. The statement could not be looked upon as absolutely correct. That which Ezekiel denominates clean water, and what Paul designates as pure water, is what Jesus names *living water*. But who is there who doubts that, in the last instance, the Holy Spirit is that which is referred to?"—(*Theological Essays*, pp. 313, 314.)

The combined force of the two expressions is, therefore, Having a sense of forgiveness, and a measure of grace—

being delivered from the fear of death, and enabled to live a life of faith. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," Rom. v. 1, 2.

But if this be the meaning, while the sprinkling points to an effect upon the heart, the washing with pure water is to be regarded as indicating the presence, not of a rite, but of the Spirit.

## VII.

"There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."—1 JOHN v. 8.

After what has been said upon earlier passages, it will not be necessary to dwell long upon this. The word rendered *spirit*, as we have seen, is elsewhere translated *wind* or *breath*; so that we might read—There are three that bear witness in earth, the wind, and the water, and the blood. Now, either these three expressions must all be taken literally, or all spiritually. It will not do to say that one is literal, and another spiritual—that we are to have literal water, but spiritual wind. The same method of exposition must be applied in each case. Which, then, is the correct method? It would be possible to retain a literal water, for it is still in common use in a religious service. It would be possible to retain a literal wind, for some still copy in the letter the action of the Saviour when "He breathed on" the disciples, "and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," John xx. 22. But who is there that makes a pretence of using literal blood in a religious ceremony, unless it be those who hold the doctrine of transubstantiation, and maintain that in the mass the sacrifice of Calvary is repeated; so that, instead of Christ being "once offered to bear the sins of many," there is oftentimes the same sacrifice "year by year continually." The literal interpretation cannot be carried consistently through the whole passage without landing us in absurdities and contradictions of Scripture. Let us try the other.

The spiritual counterpart of *the wind* we have seen to be the Holy Ghost, as the *Regenerator*, the author of spiritual *life*. The spiritual counterpart of *the water* we have seen to be the Holy Ghost as the *purifier* and *supporter of life*, washing away defilement, and quenching spiritual thirst. The two together give us the "regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The spiritual counterpart of *the blood* of bulls and of goats is the one offering, by which Christ has for ever perfected them that are sanctified. He gave His soul an offering for sin, and thus brought in everlasting righteousness. By means of this offering the believer has his heart "sprinkled from an evil conscience." Without it, he would be in terror of God's judgment, the wrath which lies on the children of disobedience. But through it he becomes justified and accepted in the beloved. The blood, combined with the water and the wind, gives us the character, "washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," the man upon whom "there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus," and who walks "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

If this be the correct view, the passage says nothing of literal water, or of a ritual baptism; but it testifies to the fact, that the Spirit dwells in every true disciple.

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## CONCLUSION.

IN drawing these remarks to a close, it may be well to sum up, and collect in one view the evidence on the subject of baptism which is scattered over the preceding pages, and which has been deduced from the various passages that have passed in review before us. From this examination it appears—1. That before the crucifixion, and consequently before the giving of the commission in Matt. xxviii. 19, a distinction is drawn between the bap-

tism of John and the baptism of Jesus—the first being with water, administered in the lifetime of the Saviour—the second with the Spirit, to be administered after His death. 2. That Christian baptism, as enjoined in this commission, was to be administered in the second of these periods; and that—being into the name, or character, or likeness, of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—it is, like the baptism by Jesus, *with the Spirit*. 3. That such a baptism has been administered by disciples, God being the first cause, but they being consciously agents in communicating spiritual influences. 4. That while baptism with water was administered in some cases after Pentecost, there is no reason to believe that this was in compliance with the command of Jesus. 5. That the epistles frequently mention the subject of baptism, but never as a rite, except in one case (1 Cor. i. 13-17), and then to condemn it; while they often mention it as a doctrine, and affirm of it in this view that it is one, that it saves, that it implies union to Christ, a putting on of Christ, a burial with Christ, and a resurrection to newness of life, and that it is effected by the one Spirit. 6. That of passages not mentioning the subject directly, but supposed to bear upon it, not one favours a ritual baptism, while all set forth the importance which is to be attached to the baptism of the Spirit. The general conclusion which I derive from the foregoing is, that Christian baptism is the baptism of the Spirit, that there is no authority in the New Testament for a ritual baptism in the present dispensation; but that when Jesus said, “Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” He inculcated upon disciples the duty of imparting spiritual influences, of converting sinners, and building up converts in their most holy faith.

And let me remind the reader that this is not a mere speculative question in regard to which much may be said on both sides, and either opinion held with equal safety. If the view presented in these pages be the scriptural one, then not only is the common practice of sprin-

ling or dipping erroneous, but it is an error which may be attended with the most serious consequences. "If ye be circumcised," says Paul, "Christ shall profit you nothing." And if another rite be put in the place of circumcision, having as little reason to claim a divine sanction for its administration now, it too must prove a barrier in the way of true religion. The rite obtains the name of baptism, and this, with most minds, is sufficient to convey the impression that the characters which are ascribed to baptism in Scripture belong to the rite. A few men of spiritual discernment may stand forth and say—The burial with Christ, the resurrection with Christ, the union to Christ—these are true, not of those who have received the rite, but of those who possess the Spirit. But this does not seriously alarm men. The offence of the cross has ceased. They read in their Bibles that "baptism doth save," and the same persons who warn them against trusting in rites, admit that they are baptized.

But let it be once fairly understood that baptism with water is not a Gospel ordinance, and men may come to inquire what that baptism is which saves. Let it be given out that compliance with rites does not bring men any nearer heaven, and is not required by God; and they may be stirred up to ask what is the bond which unites to the Saviour. If many should feel that with the rite they have lost their all, that they have been leaning upon a broken reed, some may be led to flee for refuge even yet to the only ark of safety, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let it be distinctly announced that Christ does not send disciples to administer rites, but to preach the Gospel, to preach Christ and Him crucified; and if many should feel that their occupation is gone, that they have run without being sent, some may possibly be led to aspire to a higher commission, or to wait for the promise of the Father, to wait till they be endued with power from on high. "Stand still," said Israel's leader, "and see the salvation of the LORD." And better far to wait than to undertake a warfare on our own charges. But who need stand idly by when the promise is so abundant,

“If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much ‘more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!’—when the invitation is so free, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!”—when the harvest is so great and the labourers so few! If little has yet been done in the way of converting men, let us confess that we have been weak and carnal, and have walked as men; but let us never despair of seeing realized the great and glorious things predicted in the Gospel. If the Christian is barely distinguishable from the man of the world, let us own it that we have not been careful to live in the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit; but let us not doubt the truth of God’s word, nor believe that failure is due to anything but our own indolence and want of faith. If the nations are yet to be baptized with the Spirit, let us not shrink from the commission, but seek to discharge it—not in a spirit of pride or self-sufficiency, but with humble trust in the promise, “Lo, I am with you alway;” resting satisfied that if we be with Jesus, greater is He that is on our side than all that can be against us. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and *sinners shall be converted unto thee.*”

